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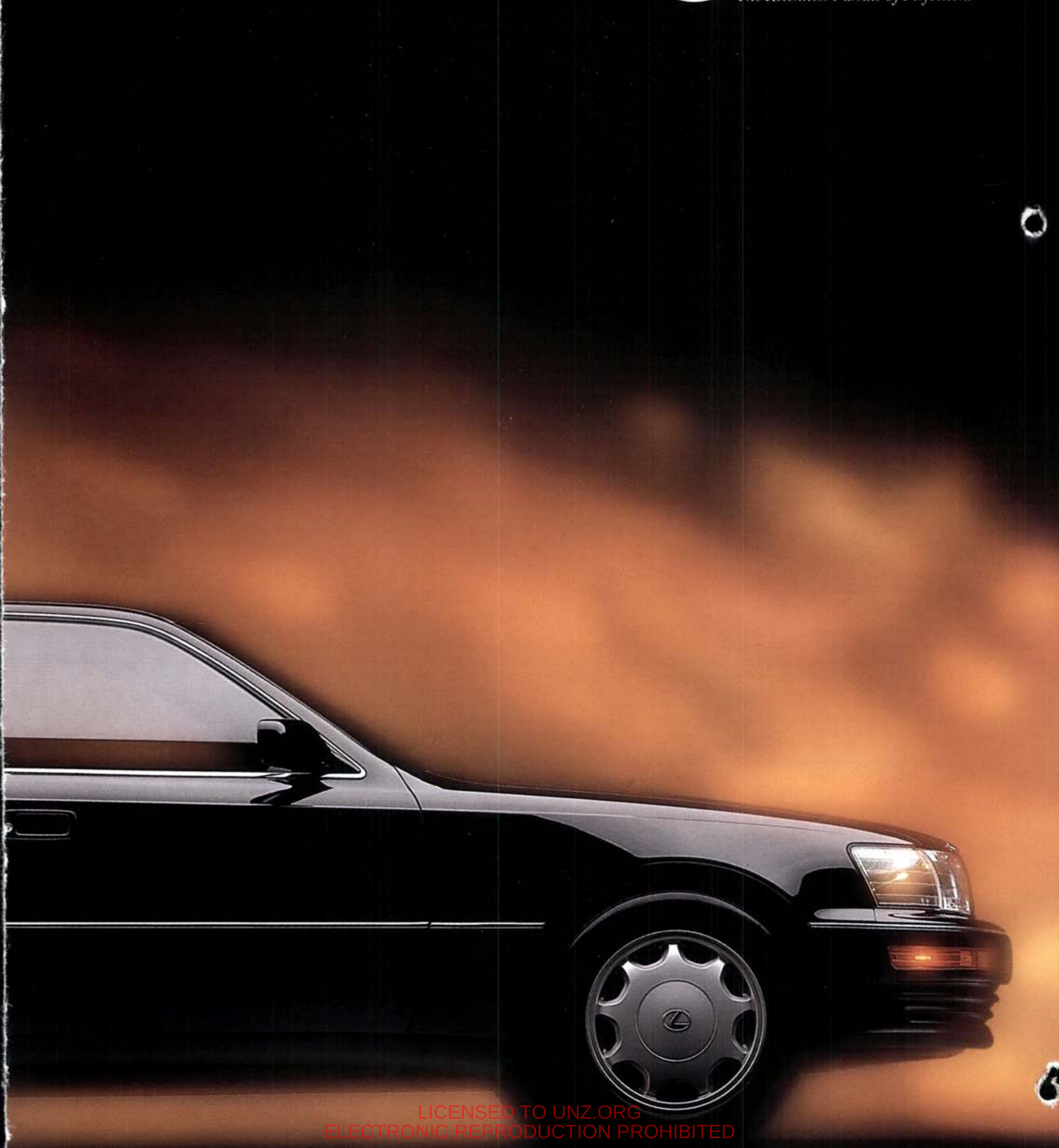

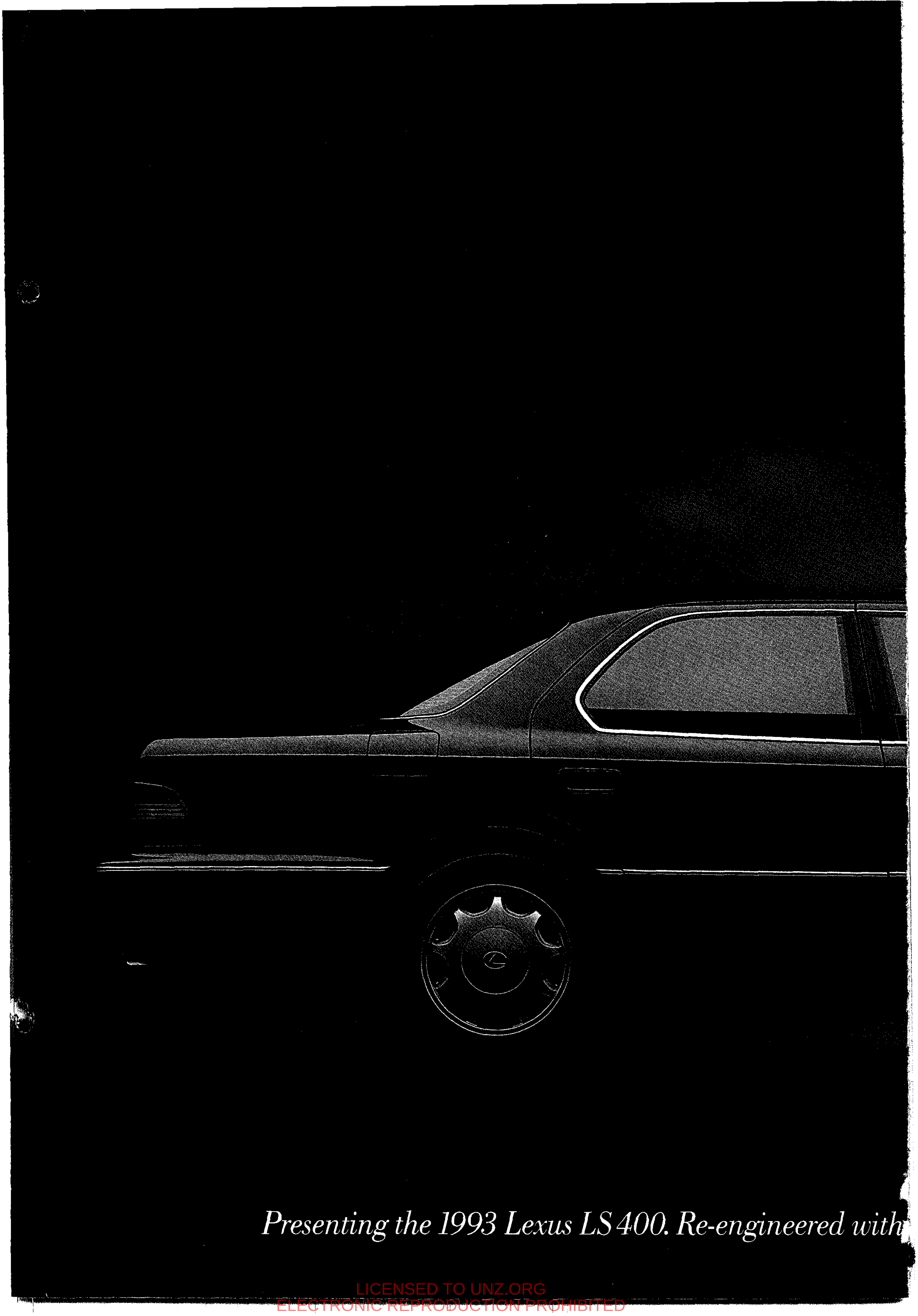
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THE NEW YORKER

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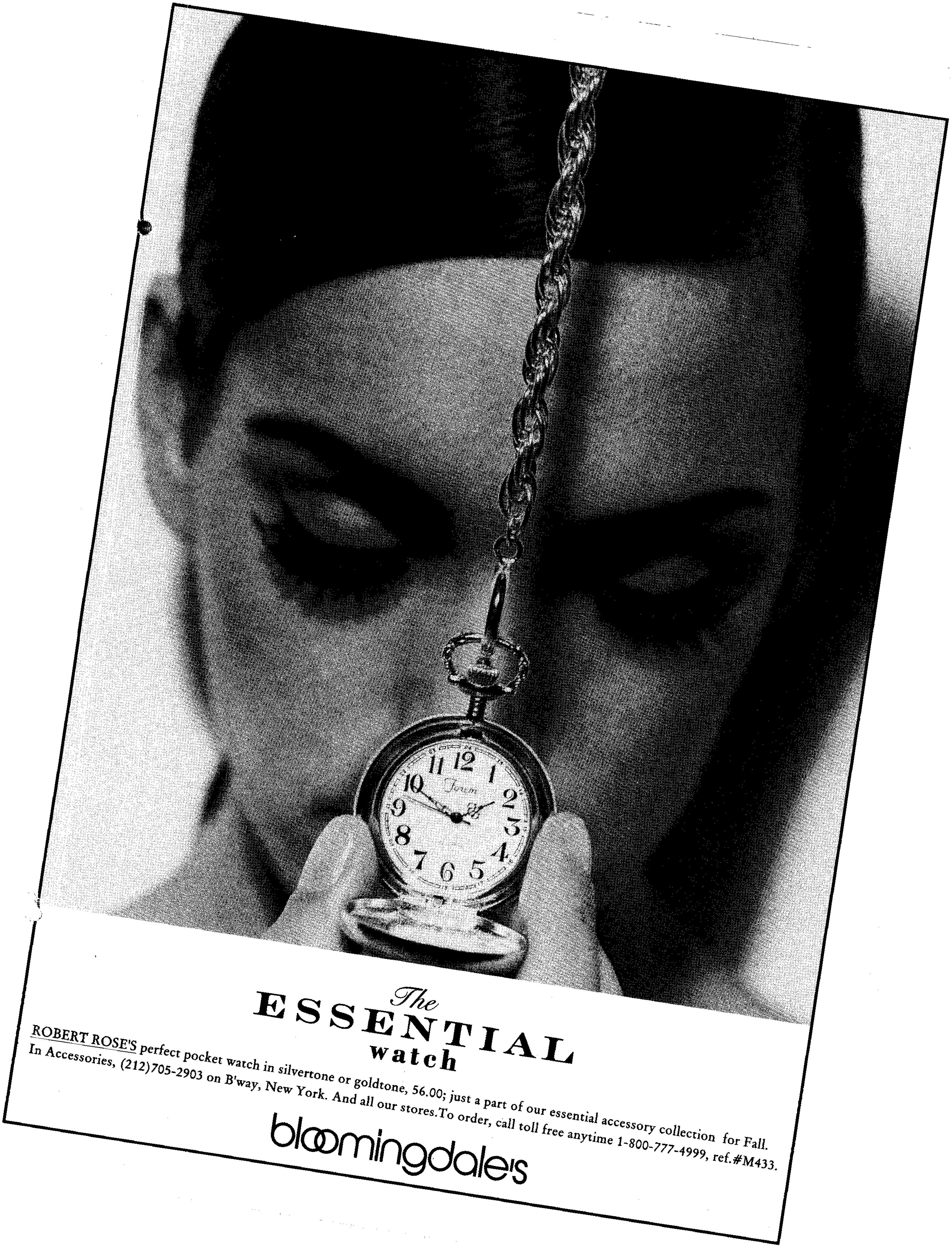

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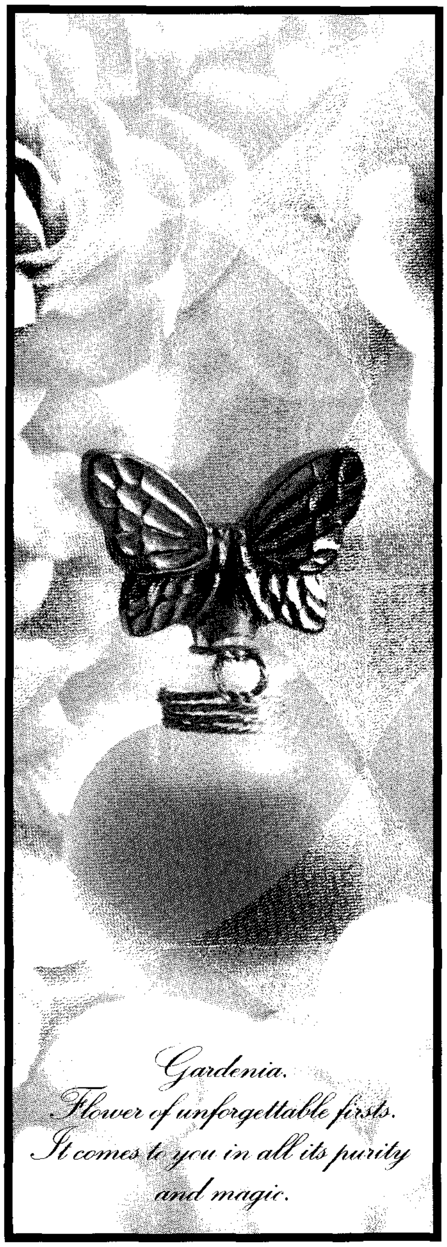
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COMMENT

MALICE TOWARD SOME

"I HAPPEN to be pro-life," Dan Quayle said during a relatively civil moment of his televised debate last week with Al Gore and James Stockdale. And so he is, even if a remark he made earlier in the campaign—that he would advise his daughter against terminating a (hypothetical) pregnancy but would support her in whatever decision she might make—suggests that he does not understand the implications either of his own position (which is that abortion should be illegal except in cases of rape, incest, or a threat to the mother's life) or of his party's (which is that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances). There is one issue of human sexuality, however, on which the Vice-President might be said to be unequivocally pro-choice. On the September 13th broadcast of ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley," he was asked whether he thought that homosexuality was rooted in nature or in society. "My viewpoint is that it's more of a choice than a biological situation," he answered, and went on to say, "It is a wrong choice. I do believe in most cases it certainly is a choice."

It is impossible to know whether Mr. Quayle truly believes this. But the theory that homosexuality is a matter of choice—"life-style choice," in the usual formulation—is indispensable to the prejudice against homosexuals. This year, the Republican Party has given voice to this variety of bigotry in all its forms, from the virulent, through the modulated, to the very mild. The virulent form got unprecedented exposure at the Republican Convention this summer, most notably in the speeches of Patrick Buchanan and Pat Robertson. The modulated form was expressed in the Party's platform, which opposed extending civil-rights protections to gays and allowing them to serve in the armed forces. The mild form has been the specialty of the Vice-President and of President Bush himself, who told an interviewer the week before the Convention that homosexuality is "a life style that in my view is not normal" and "not right."

If by "not normal" the President meant that homosexuality is uncharacteristic of the majority—that it deviates from the mean—he was surely correct, but only in the sense that it is also "not normal" to have gone to Yale or to have a vacation house in Maine. But if "normal" means "occurring naturally"—one

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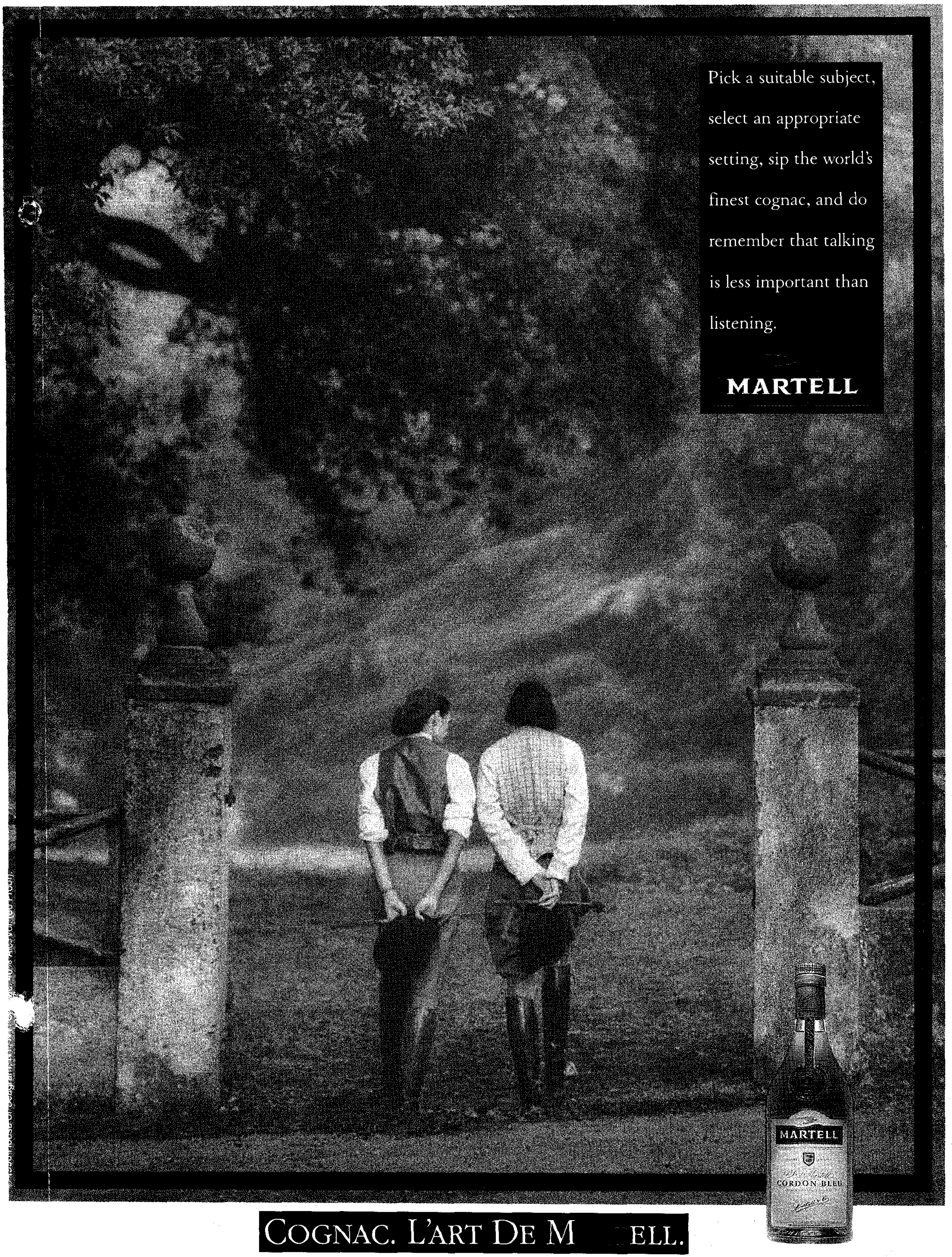
THE OF CONVERSATION.



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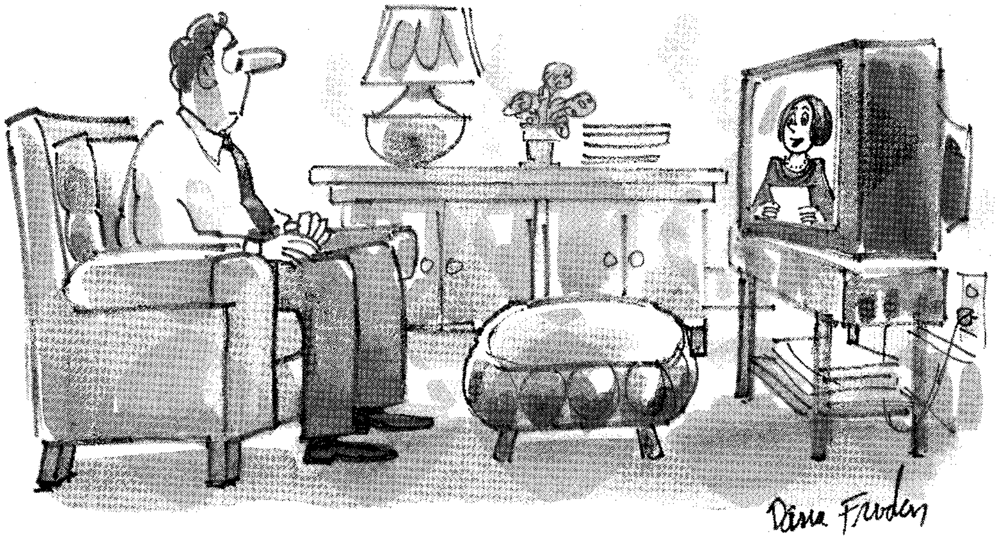

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of its dictionary definitions—then he was surely wrong. Homosexuality occurs naturally in every human society, and in roughly the same numbers regardless of the level of social tolerance. Recent scientific evidence suggests, moreover, that sexual orientation correlates closely with genetic factors. A study that was conducted by Michael Bailey, a psychologist at Northwestern University, and Richard Pillard, a psychiatrist at Boston University School of Medicine, and was published last December in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* showed that a man has a fifty-two-per-cent chance of being gay if he has an identical twin—that is, a twin fully sharing the same genetic makeup—who is gay, but only a twenty-two-per-cent chance if he has a fraternal twin who is gay, and merely an eleven-per-cent chance if he has an unrelated, adopted brother who is gay. Bailey and Pillard have since conducted a similar study of women, with strikingly similar results. "In contrast," they write, "research on social factors has been fruitless."

What does correlate with "social factors" is not homosexuality itself but the degree of suffering that is imposed upon homosexuals for being homosexuals. Even in our society, a remarkably tolerant one by global and by historical standards, there is almost certainly no such thing as a homosexual—male or female, acknowledged or "closeted"—who has not at some point in his or her life felt, at the very least, the anguish of self-reproach or of fear of rejection. If the experience of actual human beings is any guide, it is both preposterous and callous to speak of homosexuality as just another choice of life style. Homosexuality is not an illness, not a contagion, not a moral failing. It is simply a predisposition. One gay man, a forty-one-year-old lawyer who recently "came out" in a newspaper interview in which he disputed Mr. Quayle's view, put it this way: "You can say in some sense I choose to write with my right or left hand, but the point is that it is such an automatic decision. That's how I see homosexuality."

The Republican Party is no exception to the rule that any large aggregation of people has its share of homosexuals, as George and Barbara Bush, if not Dan Quayle, know perfectly well. The lawyer who drew the interesting parallel between sexual orientation and handedness is John Schlafly, who says that he shares most of the political views of his mother, the veteran conservative leader Phyllis Schlafly. The Log Cabin Federation, a national organization of gay and lesbian Republicans, has six thousand members. (It has declined to endorse the Bush-Quayle ticket.) The roster of prominent Republicans known to be gay has included Roy Cohn, the lawyer; Representative Stewart McKinney, of Connecticut; and Terry Dolan, the celebrated New Right fund-raiser—all of whom died of AIDS. Robert Mosbacher, one of George Bush's oldest friends, the principal fund-raiser for his three Presidential campaigns, and a former member of his Cabinet, has a forty-three-year-old daughter, Diane, who is a publicly proclaimed lesbian.

President and Mrs. Bush welcomed Dee Mosbacher to the White House in 1989, and the President was photographed with her and the woman her father calls her spouse. And the record of Mr. Bush as President did show, intermittently, some slight consideration for homosexuals, especially with respect to the AIDS plague. According to Administration figures, which have been the subject of much debate, federal AIDS spending has increased under Bush; and Bush has invited gay leaders to the White House for two bill signings, and, with his wife, visited AIDS patients in the hospital. That sort of thing was dropped as soon as the White House entered what Mr. Bush calls "campaign mode." And if in the weeks before the election the Bush-Quayle organization has dropped its attacks on homosexuals, along with most of the rest of its "family values" baggage, it was not from pangs of conscience. It did so purely as a result of realizing that the strategy had become politically counterproductive, driving away moderate voters, who, whatever their discomfort with gay culture, dislike conspicuous displays of intolerance. The earlier attacks have not been repudiated, and they ought not to be forgotten.

"The conservative movement had to find another enemy" after the fall of Communism, Marvin Liebman has suggested. Mr. Liebman, sixty-nine years old, is an elder of that movement: the groups he has helped found include, among many others, Young Americans for Freedom and the American Conservative Union. Mr. Liebman, who two years ago announced that he was gay, in a letter to *National Review*, has said that "homosexuals poisoning society" have been drafted to fill the void. "The rhetoric is almost word for word what they used about the Communists: schools, Hollywood, media élite," he said. "Those code words used to mean Jews, but now they also mean gays."

Communism, of course, actually was an enemy of the values that American society is supposed to stand for. The mistake some conservatives made was, instead of just opposing it, to conflate it with liberalism. Homosexuality and homosexuals are the enemies of no one. When those who should—who must—know better indulge the reflex to demonize, they disgrace only themselves. ♦

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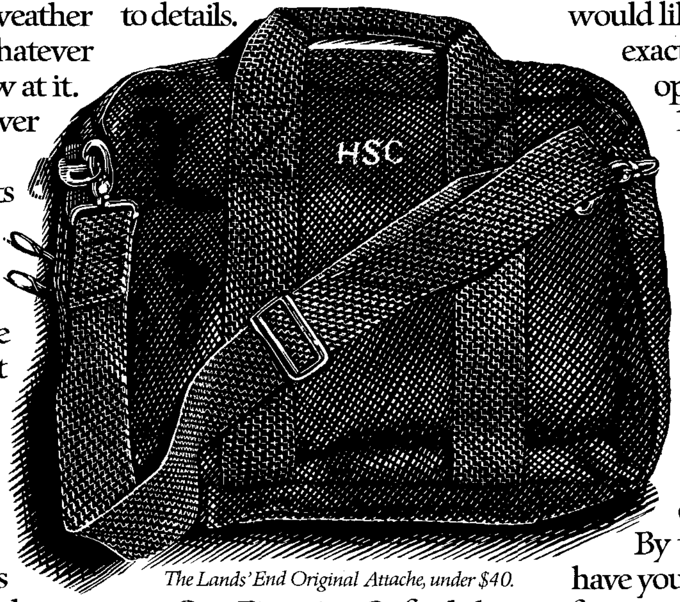

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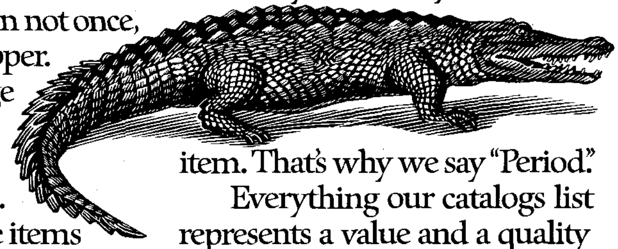

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THE THEATRE

Hindsight

Few news stories over the past decade have been as purely tragic as that of the several hundred Cambodian refugees in this country, most of them women, who lost their sight as a result of having witnessed Khmer Rouge-sponsored atrocities in their homeland. No physiological cause for the blindness has yet been discovered: its origin is strictly psychosomatic, but it seems somehow mythic. Thus it is entirely fitting that the playwright Ernest Abuba and the composer Louis Stewart, who have created a new music-theatre work on the subject, went to Milton for their title. "Cambodia Agonistes," as their collaboration is called, moves between present-day Chinatown (though most of the refugees reside in Southern California) and Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge.

Tisa Chang, who is staging "Cambodia Agonistes" for the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre (of which she is the artistic director), has avoided a literal, graphic approach. "The text itself is quite surrealistic," she says, "and it is about eighty per cent sung." The piece also incorporates classical Cambodian ballet. Chang says that music and dance have allowed for a more emotionally expressive approach to the horrors inherent in the material. "We didn't want people to feel that they were in for a grim, two-hour recounting of the Cambodian holocaust; we've built in touches of humor, too. But it's never levity that trivializes."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

A . . . My Name Is Still Alice—A sequel to the 1984 musical revue "A . . . My Name Is Alice." Conceived and directed by Joan Micklin Silver and Julianne Boyd. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Bubbe Meises, Bubbe Stories—A musical in which a granddaughter recalls her grandmothers and their stories. Written by, and starring, Ellen Gould. In previews. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Cambodia Agonistes—A music-theatre work by Ernest Abuba and Louis Stewart, which opens the season for Pan Asian Rep. Previews begin Oct. 28. (St. Clement's 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660.)

Camp Paradox—A play by Barbara Graham, set at a girls' camp, in 1963. Previews begin Oct. 22. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

C. Colombo Inc., Export/Import, Genoa—A performance piece by Leo Bassi, an Italian "clown-terrorist." Previews through Oct. 25. Opens Oct. 26 at 8. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

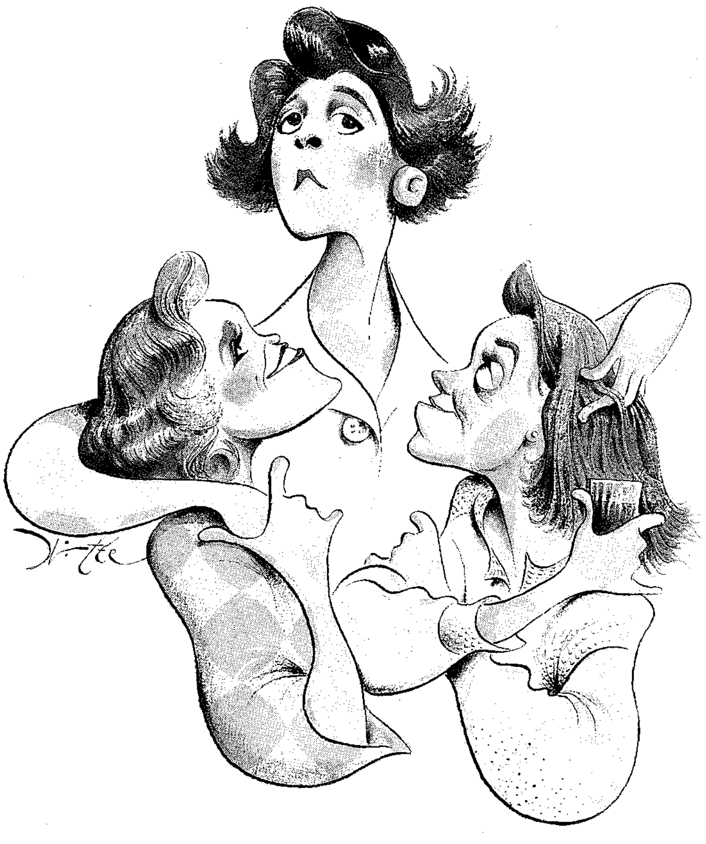
The Destiny of Me—A new play by Larry Kramer, which picks up ten years after "The Normal Heart," opens the season for Circle Rep. Peter Frechette, Jonathan Hadary, Oni Faida Lampley, Piper Laurie, Bruce McCarty, John Cameron Mitchell, and David Spielberg are in the cast. Opens Oct. 20 at 8. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)—Cherry Jones has the lead in a comedy by Ann-Marie MacDonald. Previews Oct. 19-20. Opens Oct. 21 at 7. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Juno—The 1959 Marc Blitzstein-Joseph Stein musical based on Sean O'Casey's "Juno and the Paycock," which has been revised for this production by Mr. Stein and the current director, Lonny Price. Previews through Oct. 27. Opens Oct. 28 at 8. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Nothing Sacred—Canadian playwright George F. Walker's loosely adapted version of Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons." Preview on Oct. 20. Opens Oct. 21 at 8. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242.)

Oleanna—William H. Macy and Rebecca Pidgeon in a new play written and directed by David Mamet. Previews through Oct. 24. Opens Oct. 25 at 7. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)



Madeline Kahn, Jane Alexander, and Julie Dretzin in "The Sisters Rosensweig"

The Show-Off—The Roundabout Theatre Company's production of George Kelly's 1924 comedy, with Pat Carroll, Boyd Gaines, Laura Esterman, and Sophie Hayden. In previews. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, with Jane Alexander, Madeline Kahn, Frances McDormand, and Julie Dretzin. Daniel Sullivan directed. Previews Oct. 20-21. Opens Oct. 22 at 6:45. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Solitary Confinement—Stacy Keach stars in a thriller by Rupert Holmes. Previews begin Oct. 27. (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 307-4100.)

Spic-O-Rama—John Leguizamo's latest one-man show. It's the story of the dysfunctional Gigante clan, as seen through the eyes of a precocious nine-year-old. Previews through Oct. 26. Opens Oct. 27 at 8. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

A Suffering Colonel—A farce written by Kenneth Lonergan and directed by Matthew Broderick. Opens Oct. 19 at 8, and runs through Nov. 7. (Naked Angels, 114 W. 17th St. 727-0012.)

OPENED RECENTLY

The Best of Forbidden Broadway—This tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running, ever-fluctuating musical revue is, as one might expect, a treat. There is some new material, but the sharpest sequences are still the spoof of "M. Butterfly" and the "Speed-the-Plow" number, "Madonna's Brain," in which David Mamet and Ron Silver try to teach Madonna to act and she ends up tearing off most of her clothes. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Brother Truckers—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company presents a new comedy by Georg Osterman. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Conversations with My Father—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. As staged by Daniel Sullivan, with an ace cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch, the play does what "Jake's Women" and "Dancing at Lughnasa" would probably do if their authors were, respectively, more sophisticated and less sentimental. Grab this one. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Crazy for You—Loosely based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Falsettos—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. The appeal of Mr. Finn's trilogy has always been puzzling. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. But it has always seemed like banality set to music: shallow, unlikable people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Five Guys Named Moe—The guys are black dancers and singers of ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Fortinbras—The Signature Theatre Company presents a 1991 comedy by Lee Blessing. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 1.)

Guys and Dolls—A lively production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris—A revival of the musical put together from the works of M. Brel by Eric Blau and Mort Shuman. Directed by Elly Stone, one of the stars of the original show. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Jake's Women—Alan Alda is at his genial best in the new Neil Simon. The play, about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present, has some funny lines and a lot of phony dialogue. It's predictable, banal, and contrived, but at least it showcases a fine cast of actresses that includes Kate Burton and Joyce Van Patten. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. Closes Oct. 25.)

Jelly's Last Jam—The music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delineation of Morton himself. The show, an original if there ever was one, was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savion Glover, who plays the character as a young man, is worthy of him, which is saying a lot. Also present are Keith David, Tonya Pinkins, Wayne Mathis, and Mary Bond Davis. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

The Madame MacAdam Travelling Theatre—A new comic drama written by Thomas Kilroy and presented by the Irish Repertory Theatre Company. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Mad Forest—Caryl Churchill's 1990 play about post-Ceausescu Romania. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

A Moon for the Misbegotten—A production of Eugene O'Neill's play. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Oct. 24.)

The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me—A play written and performed by David Drake. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

Oba Oba '93—Seventy-five dancers, singers, and musicians from Brazil. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Remembrance—Set in Belfast, Graham Reid's absorbing and often entertaining play tells the story of a man and a woman—he a Protestant and she a Catholic, and both of them widowed and in their sixties—who meet regularly at a cemetery (each there to mourn a son who was a victim of the current "troubles") and who slowly fall in love. They are both beset by grown children who, in different ways, raise hell. The action is a matter of brief scenes, some of them quite funny. Milo O'Shea and Frances Sternhagen can seldom have been better than they are in the leading roles, and they are ably supported by Mia Dillon, Caroleen Feeney, John Finn, and Terry Donnelly. Terence Lamude directed. (10/12/92) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

The Roads to Home—In three short acts that are more triptych than play, Horton Foote depicts three gentlewomen of Houston, all of them thwarted or otherwise wounded, and one of them mad. The third and best act is set in

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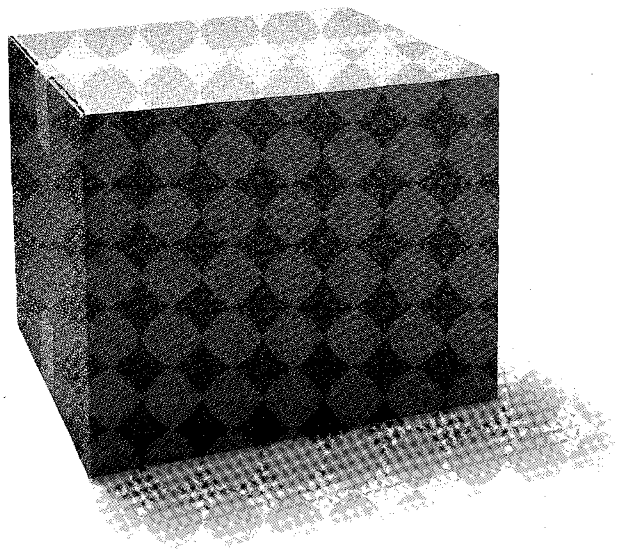

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

the asylum to which the madwoman has been committed. Jean Stapleton, Rochelle Oliver, and Hallie Foote appear in the leading roles. All of them are good, and they are well supported (theatrically speaking) by Michael Hadge, William Alderson, and Emmett O'Sullivan-Moore, among others. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes Nov. 8.)

Ruthless!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

York Theatre Company—Presenting **six wives**, a musical by Joe Masteroff and Edward Thomas. (2 E. 90th St. 534-5366. Closes Oct. [illegible].)

You Could Be Home Now—A one-woman show written by, and starring, Ann Magnuson. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Nov. 1.)

LONG RUNS

beau jest: A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)... **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.)... **catskills on broadway:** A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians; and Louise DuArt does impressions. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)... **dancing at lughnasa:** How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes Oct. 25.)... **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirty-second birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.)... **forever plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)... **lost in yonkers:** This family melodrama by Neil Simon, set in Yonkers during the Second World War, is about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)... **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **miss saigon:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)... **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)... **the phantom of the opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 24[illegible] W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **the secret garden:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. It's subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **tubes:** A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)... **the will rogers follies:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

Changing Partners

It's never too late to learn something old. A couple of years back, the Mexican filmmaker María Novaro, now forty, began work on a movie, called "Danzón," about women in middle age. The title refers to a gracious and subtle dance form based on the cotillon of pre-Revolutionary France. Danzón came to Mexico from Haiti, about a century ago; it has since spawned several Mexican styles or schools, and has inspired dancers and orchestras to pursue increasingly refined levels of virtuosity.

For her film (which is currently playing at the Lincoln Plaza Cinema), Ms. Novaro studied danzón with José Platas, an octogenarian master whose style emphasizes nuance. "He taught me to keep the dance closed, to take very, very small steps, and to permit oneself only a few moments of liberty," Ms. Novaro said recently. "The couple *never* talk while dancing, and there is hardly any eye contact between them, so when they do look at each other the moment is exceptionally powerful."

In one scene, the heroine teaches the dance to a friend—a drag queen. His height and strength make him suitable for the man's role, but he begs to learn the woman's part. "I chose danzón as a theme precisely because it is a wonderful, old-fashioned dance, in which the roles of men and women are very particular," said Ms. Novaro. "I wanted to play with them."

Paul Taylor Dance Company—Opening performances of a two-week engagement that will run through Nov. 8. Oct. 27 at 7: "Oz" (New York première), "Musical Offering," and "Company B." . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 8: "Junction," "Epic," "Lost, Found, and Lost," and "Syzygy." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company—New works to be performed during the engagement include "Havoc," "Fête," "Last Night on Earth," "Love Defined" (with the Lyon Opera Ballet), and "Aria" (with guest artist Jennifer Gelfand, of the Boston Ballet). The programs are different each day. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 20 at 7:30, Oct. 21-24 at 8, and Oct. 25 at 2 and 7:30.)

Douglas Dunn & Dancers—"Landing" (première), "Skid," and "Rubble Dance" (première). (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Oct. 21-24 at 8 and Oct. 25 at 3.)

International Dance Festival—The Gulden Irish Step Dance Troupe, Kabuki dancer Kyoko Ohnishi, the Glinka Russian Folk Dance Group, the Cypreco Folk Dancers, Vajiradajmmapadip Thai Temple Group, and Ballet Folklórico Mejicano de Nueva York. (Y.W.C.A., Third and Atlantic Aves., Brooklyn. 1-718 875-1190. Oct. 24 at 7.)

Trisler Danscompany—In works by Trisler ("Dance for Six"), Milton Myers (the New York première of "Nuevo Tango"), Charles Moulton (the première of "Chickens"), and Geoffrey Holder ("The Creation," a solo). With guest artist Carmen de Lavallade in the Holder piece. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 27-28 at 8. Through Nov. 1.)

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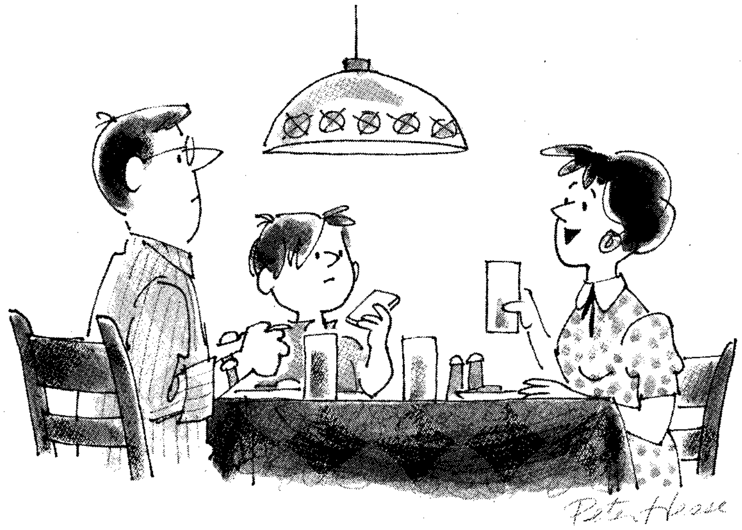

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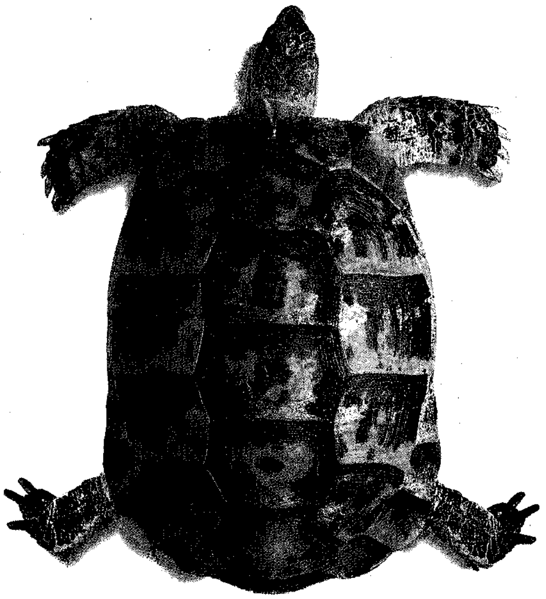

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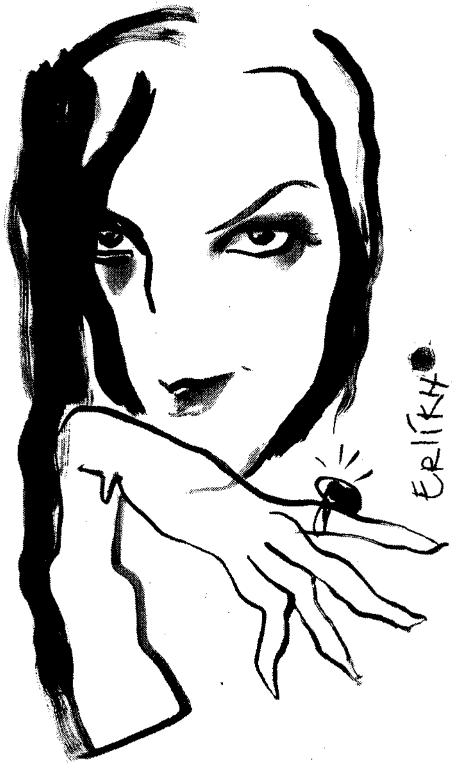

Kirsty MacColl

NIGHT LIFE

Sing It Again

OVER the past couple of years, so many pop stars have dipped into the standards that nobody would be surprised if Axl Rose made a record called "All of Me." The majority of these newborn crooners have watched their torch songs go up in smoke, of course, but there are a few pop singers who can take on a standard without beating it senseless or respecting it to death.

Kirsty MacColl, for instance, squeezed some sparks out of "Miss Otis Regrets" on the 1990 Cole Porter tribute "Red, Hot, and Blue." Then, last spring, the Irish-born singer released a record that proved she could squeeze sparks out of almost anything. That record was "Electric Landlady"—a goof on Jimi Hendrix' album "Electric Ladyland"—and it found MacColl sounding positively invincible, turning her chilly voice and her sly, wayward melodies to pop, salsa, "lite" jazz, and roguish hinterland folk. MacColl has released only two records in this country, but she's been one of pop's great collaborators, joining forces with the Pogues, the Smiths, Happy Mondays, and Billy Bragg, among others.

The singer is currently between record labels—which is a crime against nature, really—but she'll be performing at the Bottom Line October 19-20. MacColl's shows will be a welcome antidote to all those pop stars who made "dilettante" a dirty word.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—"If people really need a fix of torch singing, they'll know where to find me," **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** said recently. The singer's past five seasons here have been such a success that this year the management has crowned her unofficial Oak Room queen. Her sixteen-week run will feature six separate shows, the first of which, "Just Kern," is currently under way. Ms. Marcovicci is a skilled vocalist who pays particular care to lyrical content. And she's a lively raconteur: her patter is sprinkled with allusions to everyone from Dorothy Parker to Nietzsche. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

A-TRAIN, 318 W. 45th St. (974-0500)—A flashy but comfortable new jazz club that features African/Caribbean food, a Bessie Smith mural, and waitresses in tight black cocktail dresses. During the early evening, small combos play in the bar area; the main events take place on a stage with a bas-relief of the Manhattan skyline. Music starts up a little after nine.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars. Actor **RANDY ALLEN** will be here Oct. 20-25 (at nine, with second shows at eleven-fifteen on Friday and Saturday) with his one-man show, "P.S. Bette Davis." Allen spends two and a half hours on makeup before the show, and he can talk the talk and walk the walk. The "P.S." in his title stands for "post-stroke," but Allen's show is more soul-searching and more unsettling than the arch, campy revue one might expect. The actor will return for a week-long run in December. **BLOSSOM DEARIE** occupies the piano bench Fridays and Saturdays at six-thirty and Sundays at three. Closed Mondays.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy, two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. **DAKOTA STATON** leads a trio Oct. 23-24. Music from nine. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the rest room into something of a steeplechase. Oct. 20-25 belongs to **REGINA BELLE;** on Oct. 27, **DIANNE REEVES** begins a week-long stay. First set at nine. Dining.

BLUE WILLOW, 644 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (673-6480)—This room is oddly Victorian for lower Broadway, a region almost exclusively devoted to youth culture. You won't find any funky murals or drinks with funny names here, just marble walls, antique furnishings, and a ceiling that would be hard to hit with a baseball. It's an agreeable place for conversation, which is probably why the small jazz combos that set up here nightly often get relegated to being background music. Music from seven-thirty Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great, black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. **KIRSTY MAC COLL** will be here Oct. 19-20. On Oct. 21, Vin Scelsa hosts another of his songwriter kaffeeklatsches, this one including **NANCI GRIFFITH, ZACHARY RICHARD,** and **KATE** and **ANNA MC GARRIGLE.** Zachary Richard is a Louisiana-based singer-accordionist whose best music is as whimsical as Lyle Lovett's and as wistful as Daniel Lanois's. Richard's live performances are as good an opportunity as Manhattanites are likely to get to do the

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Cajun two-step, although the singer's softer, more thoughtful side tends to get lost in all the shuffling. Nanci Griffith is an extraordinary songwriter, but she's not nearly as famous as she should be, and that seems to irritate her. Over the past half-dozen years, the folk-and-country singer has moved closer and closer toward pop, giving her keyboard player more than enough rope with which to hang himself. **IRIS DE MENT**, who'll share a bill with **GUY CLARK** on Oct. 28, sounds a little like Griffith used to. Her first album, "Infamous Angel," is a keeper: a spare, wide-eyed sort of country album full of pen-and-ink drawings of childhood and young love. In concert, DeMent is utterly charming—sweet and honest and just the tiniest bit goofy. Also this week: **JOE ELY** (Oct. 22) and ***TUCK & PATTI*** *(Oct. 26-27). Shows are usually* at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar in the heart of N.Y.U. country. It's advisable to get all your talking done between sets, because, once the first chord is struck, the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. **CYRUS CHESTNUT** and **KENNY DAVIS** are on the premises Oct. 19-24; guitarist **KEVIN EUBANKS** joins them Oct. 22-24. Music from ten. Dining.

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—Don't be misled by the sleepy, hole-in-the-wall atmosphere of this bohemian little Irish café, or by the fact that the place has no stage and no music schedule. While patrons have been writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over their Rolling Rocks, some pretty fine musicians have been known to turn up and tune up: Sinéad O'Connor, Marianne Faithfull, and Luka Bloom, to name a heady few. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BARBARA COOK** concludes her run at the pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle on Oct. 24. **BOBBY SHORT** returns on Oct. 27. Shows are Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, singer-pianist **BARBARA CARROLL** holds forth. Carroll's sets, which are usually equal parts jazz and cabaret, include songs by Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Dizzy Gillespie, and Billy Strayhorn, along with some of her own. Sets from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. In recent years, CB's has become something of an empire; the club is now flanked by a pizzeria/boutique on one side and a bar/performance space on the other—all your needs taken care of in one convenient location. Music from eight on Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

CLUB 53, *Sixth Ave. at 53rd St. (261-5853)—A* new cabaret in the New York Hilton. It's a pleasantly lulling spot, where you can sink into deep sofas and eat off of big plates. Singer-comedian **JIM BAILEY** is here for a few more weeks, doing evening-length portrayals of Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at eight-forty-five, Fridays and Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five.

CONTINENTAL CLUB, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—The Swing Dance Society holds Sunday-night meetings at this Polish meeting hall, which, as it happens, probably hasn't had a facelift since the swing era. (Until recently, it was known as Irving Plaza.) The dancers span all ages and shoe sizes, but all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. **GEORGE KELLY'S JAZZ SULTANS** are in motion on Oct. 25. Sets from eight till midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

JUDYS', 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—An intimate, burgundy-walled *boîte* attached to the Iroquois Hotel. In the front room, which is decorated with photos of famous Judys—and of the famous daughter of a famous Judy—a pianist keeps the happy-hour barbirds occupied. In the dining room, vocalists work out at nine Mondays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is an airy, good-spirited place *and, while music often takes a back seat to* conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. Music from nine-forty-five. Bar-and-grill dining.

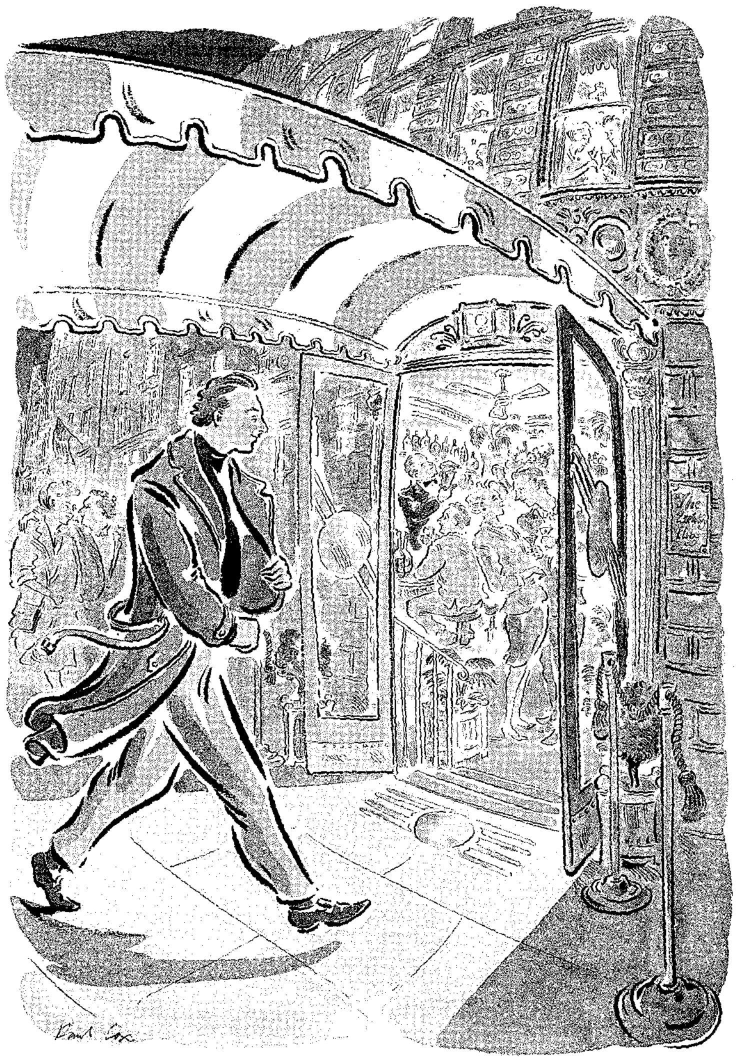
KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A long, narrow space devoted to all manner of weirdness. The Knitting Factory tends to get hot and close, and one can spend a lot of time on one's tippy-toes trying to see the stage, but at least there's always something worth seeing. Music after nine.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but perhaps a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. But the club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too, such as **JAMES MC MURTRY**, who'll be here on Oct. 22. McMurtry, a singer-songwriter-guitarist, recently put out his second record, "Candyland," and by now he probably doesn't need to be ID'd as "son of novelist Larry McMurtry." His home-grown blend of pop, folk, country, and other is bolstered by accomplished guitar playing and sharp-eyed lyrics. Music usually after nine. Dining.

LUDLOW STREET CAFÉ, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—Up until a few years ago, this stretch of the Lower East Side was only for the bold. But now that the artists have moved in, if you want to get any more bohemian, you'll have to go to Williamsburg. The Ludlow Street Café, which was one of the first places to stake a claim in the new frontier, is an unassuming basement restaurant-bar, where you can eat cheap, drink cheap, and catch live music nightly. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO**, a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mix of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, the Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars, and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of post-collegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drink concoctions lend the place a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. The veteran guitarist and singer **HUBERT SUMLIN** is here on Oct. 22; guitarist ***BOBBY RADCLIFFE*** claims Oct. 28. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

MARQUEE, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—An alternative-rock club out on the edge of town. The **BRAND NEW HEAVIES**, who'll be here on Oct. 20, are a British trio that broke through last year with a self-titled début album that traded in seventies-style soul and R. & B. The big news was that a band that actually played instruments could infiltrate the dance charts. On their recently released second effort, "Heavy Rhyme Experience, Vol. I," the trio has teamed up with a group of prominent rappers who each get a chance to set their rhymes to the band's pulsing grooves. **KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION** and **BLEACH** appear on Oct. 23. The **MEKONS**, who come in on Oct. 28,



are longtime critical and cult favorites who have never managed to reach a mass audience. This Leeds band presents itself as a cross between a revolutionary commune and a seminar on itself, all of which would be pretty awful if these survivors from the days of punk didn't play such marvellous, haunting music. Appearing with the Mekons will be **AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB**, a San Francisco-based group that plays an unapologetically bleak variety of rock. The band's last album, "Everclear," boasted some remarkable songwriting and a ragged, atmospheric beauty. As for the band's live shows, singer-songwriter Mark Eitzel said not long ago, "I'm not going to drink a six-pack onstage anymore; I'm not going to smash glasses against my head anymore. . . . Why not just play the damn song?" Shows begin at nine.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A plain blue back room whose far wall is decorated with round things: a Frisbee, some singles, a drum head, and the woofer from a speaker cabinet, to name a few. The beer of choice here is Rolling Rock—by a landslide—and the crowd may make you feel as if you have a midterm to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **YO LA TENGO** performs on Oct. 23; **JAMES MC MURTRY** (also appearing at the Lone Star Roadhouse this week) headlines on Oct. 25. Shows are usually at ten on Fridays and Saturdays, and at nine other nights.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. **VERNEL BAGNERIS**, the creator of the musicals "One Mo' Time" and "Staggerlee," is currently offering a one-man tribute to Jelly Roll Morton. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, have to compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. **MAUREEN MC GOVERN**, a singer with a powerful, versatile set of pipes and a four-octave range, is here through Oct. 24. **ANN BLYTHE** and **BILL HAYES** begin a run on Oct. 27. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS**, Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Show times vary.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" **SUN RA** is here on Oct. 21, with his aptly named

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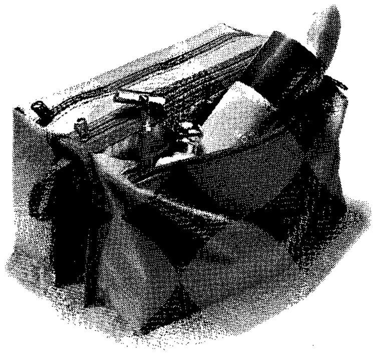

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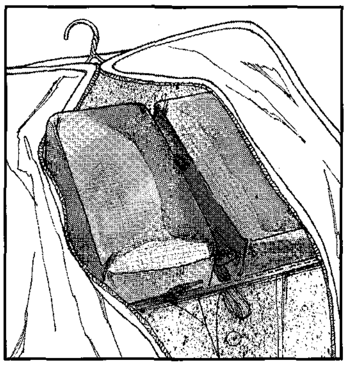

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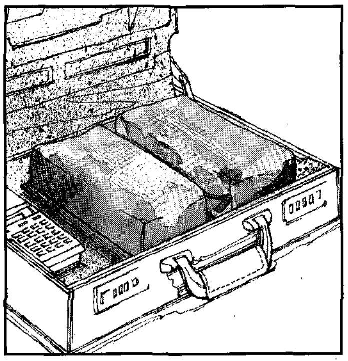

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NIGHT LIFE–*Cont'd*

Intergalactic Arkestra; **SUGAR MINOTT** performs on Oct. 22. Closed Sundays. Dining.

SPACE AT CHASE, 98 Third Ave., at 12th St. (475-1407)—One of those East Village joints where, for a few bucks, you can hear a handful of local rock bands. As is usually the case at these establishments, some of the bands will make you want to cower under the pinball machine while others will make you want to dance and shout and start your own independent label. As for décor, there's a bar, some chairs, some tables, some walls, a ceiling, and two dart boards. Music from nine-thirty, except on Tuesdays, when it starts at seven.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—One seldom sees jazz musicians leaning back to back as they kick out the jams, or craning their necks to harmonize into a mike. That's not to say that they don't interact onstage, but they're usually more subtle about it than rockers are. The nod, the glance, the faint smile are more common gestures, and this brown-toned ski chalet of a jazz club is a fine place to study such group dynamics. The **NAT ADDERLEY** quintet is here Oct. 20-25, and the **ART FARMER** quintet starts up on Oct. 27. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is nine. Dining.

TIME CAFÉ, 380 Lafayette St., at Great Jones St. (533-7000)—In the basement of this sleek and trendy restaurant is an unadorned, windowless midsize room where the **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble, directed by trumpeter **JACK WALRATH** and trombonist **SAM BURTIS,** concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its namesake, Charles Mingus. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, located near what was once called the Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. **TRISHA YEARWOOD** performs on Oct. 28. In the past year, Ms. Yearwood has gone from being a virtual unknown to being one of country's most visible performers, thanks to a hit single, a début album that sold over a million copies, and an opening berth on Garth Brooks' national tour. The twenty-seven-year-old Georgian's second release, "Heart in Armor," should solidify her gains. Ms. Yearwood is no purist: she takes her country with a few lumps of rock and pop. As for her singing, she has a rafter-shaking voice, but she also has great control, and she never runs roughshod over a song's more delicate sentiments. Music usually after eight-thirty.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The holiest of jazz shrines. Pianist **GERI ALLEN**—a young, Monk-influenced talent, who plays a driving, rhythmic jazz—leads her trio here Oct. 20-25; the **ROY HAYNES** quartet starts up on Oct. 27. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays. Music at nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Usually thought of as a Deadhead hangout, Wetlands has also been the launching pad for a generation of young New York bands like Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors. This week's contenders include Bloodline (Oct. 21), the Authority (Oct. 23), Savoy Truffle (Oct. 24), Insane Jane (Oct. 25), Speir Mor (Oct. 26), and the Zen Tricksters (Oct. 27). Shows from ten.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **CECIL MC BEE** and **JAMES WILLIAMS** are here through Oct. 24; **JANE JARVIS** and **JACK LESBERG** begin work on Oct. 26. Music from eight every night but Sundays, when sets begin at seven-thirty.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

SEX clubs and sex books abound, but none so far has highlighted the act closest to Vaginal Davis's heart: shrimping. In fact, had Ms. Davis, the self-proclaimed poet laureate of Santa Monica Boulevard (she seems to have shed her middle name—Creme—since her star began rising in the East), not been so distracted by a young man's rather large hightops during a recent poetry reading at A Different Light Book Store (548 Hudson Street), the audience might never have been introduced to "toe sensuality" either. Her large brown eyes rivetted on the Converses, her enormous hands locked in a caress round a high arch, and her beret completely askew, Ms. Davis was miles away from the sentiment expressed in one of her verses: "You know I never do anything on a first date. And each time I see you it's like for the first time."

"This is better than caviar," Ms. Davis said to a roomful of transfixed lovers of verse, many of them regulars at the store's frequent readings. (The next one, on October 22, at 8, will present ex-Annapolis cadet Joseph Steffan.) After regaining her composure, the writer announced that—to pay for her ticket back to California, and for the publication of epics like her closing opus, "Kisses for My President"—everyone *had* to buy a copy of her cult publication, a 'zine that gets letters from all over the world. (She read one that began, "You are the ugliest woman I ever saw.") The magazine's name? *Shrimp*.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL—Oct. 20-23 at 8, Oct. 24 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 25 at 3: "Frida," a performance, with music and puppets, about the life of Frida Kahlo. Starring Helen Schneider. (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100.). . .¶ Oct. 21-24 at 8 and Oct. 25 at 3: Spiderwoman Theatre, a Native American group, performs "Power Pipes." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. The festival continues through Dec. 27.)

"HISSING AND KISSING THE WIND"—An exhibition of videos and props from past performances by the Residents. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Open Mondays through Fridays, noon to 6. Closes Nov. 6.)

"WE COULD BE SHEROES"—A series that showcases works by female performance artists. Oct. 21: Ann Magnuson, Sally Greenhouse, Jasmine, Kimberly Flynn, and others. . . . ¶ Oct. 22: Helen Shumaker, Mary Ellen Stromm, Pat Oleszko, and others. . . . ¶ Oct. 23: Heather Woodbury, Jo Andres, Mi[illegible] Goese, and others. . . . ¶ Oct. 24: Alva Rog[illegible], Lisa Kron, Deb Margolin, and others. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Evenings at 8:30.)

LAURIE CARLOS—Presenting "White Chocolate for My Father." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Oct. 22-25 at 9. Through Nov. 1.)

DAN MOSES SCHREIER—A composer, presenting a performance piece called "No Music Composition Can Possibly Express My True Feelings #3." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Oct. 26-27 at 8.)

ALIEN COMIC—With Instant Girl, Joey Arias, Matthew Courtney, and Stuart Sherman. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Oct. 26 at 8.)

ART

A Day in the Life

SINCE the darkest ages, the cycle of the seasons and the hours of the day have attracted artists and audiences alike, providing near-infinite poetic license. You certainly don't have to be a farmer to see your own mortality in each day's waning sun, or in the yearly *petits morts* of trees. Jennifer Bartlett, who emerged in the early seventies as a New Image painter with Conceptualist underpinnings, likes nothing better than to exploit a good serial theme. She takes after David Hockney a bit in this respect, and, like him, has come to be considered a "life-style artist" par excellence. A regular in decorating magazines, she is an acknowledged tastemonger of bourgeois bohemia. She therefore elicits a certain amount of attitude from colleagues and critics.

With "Air: 24 Hours" (Cooper, 155 Wooster Street; through October 31), Bartlett picks up where the Duke de Berry's illuminators left off. This gallery-scale album of hours offers viewers vivid impressions of a day in the life of a *femme extraordinaire sensuelle.* At 2 A.M., we find her having a last cigarette beside the pool in her lower-Manhattan landscaped atrium. At 9 A.M., she's at a fish pond feeding the koi. By four in the afternoon, it's time for matters of the heart. And so on. Despite its boiled-down David Salle effects and daubs of Malcolm Morley, the group is impressive. Bartlett's colors are rich, and her imagistic prowess, if unsubtle, is very gratifying to the senses.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The Magritte retrospective includes more than a hundred and fifty paintings, drawings, bronzes, and other objects. Through Nov. 22. . . . ¶ The third-century works in "Loma Negra, A Peruvian Lord's Tomb" range from small gilt nose and ear ornaments to large headdresses and masks. . . . ¶ Portraits—and self-portraits—by Thomas Eakins, Mary Cassatt, Winslow Homer, and other American artists. Through Jan. 17. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings, drawings, and prints by the Spanish realist Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652). Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ Color photographs by Leo Rubinfien, taken in Japan, China, and Southeast Asia. Through Jan. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Henri Matisse." The long-awaited retrospective has been installed on the second and third floors. Through Jan. 12. (Plan wisely; call 708-9850 for ticket information. Tickets can be purchased in advance, and a limited number of same-day tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.). . . ¶ A hundred and twenty-five books, by such artists as Giorgio de Chirico, Lucio Fontana, Francesco Clemente, and Giacomo Manzù, are on view in "the Artist and the Book in Twentieth-Century Italy.". . . ¶ "The Photographs of Lucas Samaras" comprises thirty works from his many series of Polaroids. Through Dec. 1. . . . ¶ Two series of color and black-and-white photographs by Suzanne Lafont. Through Nov. 15. (Museum hours through Jan. 12: open daily, except Wednesdays, 10:30 to 6; Wednesdays, 12 to 6; Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-32." This large exhibition is an extraordinary—and extraordinarily frustrating—effort. The term "radical," one of the most overused adjectives in modern-art criticism, has never been more aptly used than in describing this work. The show—and its catalogue, which weighs almost seven pounds—suggests artists' endless aesthetic disagreements, as well as the perpetual struggle between the élitism of the plastic arts and the populism of the applied arts. This legendary period is evoked with experimental paintings of every level of quality, with a tantalizing variety of revolutionary posters, textiles, and porcelains, and with several superb architectural drawings and models. Other noteworthy—and less familiar—works include the captivating constructivo-figurative paintings of Anna Leporskaia, Il'ia Chashnik's delicate Suprematist watercolors, a pair of severe Nikolai Suetins on plywood, and Georgii Zel'ma's photographs of ethnic revolutionaries. The spirit of Tatlin is everywhere here, but his work is almost nowhere to be seen. Zaha Hadid's self-serving installation of the work, though, is at times a distracting imposition. Through Jan. 3. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

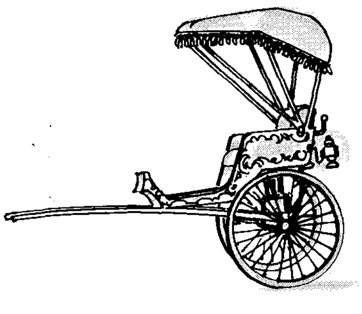
GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"Marc Chagall and the Jewish Theater." Chagall's murals for the State Jewish Chamber Theatre, in Moscow, are in many ways ambitious, but they are not especially satisfying. Notable for their delicacy, for their mixture of figurative and abstract forms, and for the essentially modest scale of their elements, they have been hung side by side on a large wall, a layout that makes it difficult to imagine their installation in the theatre. The museum has supplemented the murals with several strong paintings from its collection, most of which, however, have little relation to the murals themselves; the whole exhibition feels remarkably thin. Through Jan. 17. . . . ¶ Some hundred Rauschenberg paintings, collages, assemblages, and conceptual pieces from the early fifties. Starts Oct. 24. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings until 10.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of nearly a hundred paintings by Jean-Michel Basquiat. Starts Oct. 23. . . . ¶ Drawings from the forties by Alfonso Ossorio (1916-90). Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ "Homecoming: William H. Johnson and Afro-America, 1938-46." Through Oct. 25. . . . ¶ An auxiliary exhibition, "Parallel Visions," draws on the museum's permanent collection to provide a context for viewing Johnson's work. Among the artists represented are Philip Evergood, Edward Hopper, Jacob Lawrence, Ben Shahn, and Alice Trumbull Mason. Through Oct. 25. . . . ¶ A large exhibition of twentieth-century figurative paintings and sculptures from the collection. Through Nov. 29. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

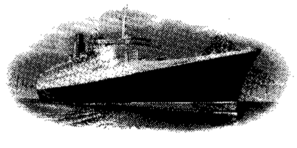
BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Meg Webster's installation, titled "Running," consists of a stream of water and an adjacent resource room with a computer and books on ecology. Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ "Fantasy Furniture" is a collection of wacky nineteenth-century pieces from around the world. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St.—Robert Gober's new installation is a brightly lit, two-thousand-square-foot Sheetrock enclosure. It's a sort of pastoral prison chamber, the four walls of which have been painted to create the illusion of a forest full of paths. Along the two long walls of this institutional grotto, eight sinks with running taps produce a waterfall sound. Below four of the sinks lurk boxes labelled "Rat Bait." Sub-

QUEEN ELIZABETH 2
SOUTH PACIFIC AND ASIA



YOUR TAXI AWAITS.



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CUNARD

L86

ART—Cont'd

versive sight gags and sly patterns—like a recurring image of the artist dressed as a bride—emerge from piles of what appear to be New York newspapers. Obituary pages, full of notices of untimely deaths, figure prominently. The piece, in fact, suggests Sartre's "No Exit": this strange penal paradise is made up of disparate, irreconcilable woes. Gober's sensibility is caustic and wry. He ties political knots into theological tangles and singes all the loose ends, leaving everything as open to doubt—or is it faith?—as the Immaculate Conception. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A new permanent installation of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth is on view in the reception hall. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—A large show of drawings by Fra Bartolommeo, including studies for "Vision of St. Bernard" and "Madonna della Misericordia." Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ "Renaissance Florence: Arts and Letters," drawn from the library's collection, features letters by Michelangelo and Machiavelli, an early edition of Dante's "Divine Comedy," and inflammatory pamphlets by Savonarola. Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ All sorts of material culled from past Presidential elections (George Washington to Teddy Roosevelt) will be on view in "Seeking the 'Splendid Misery.' " Through Nov. 22. . . . ¶ "Treasures from the Permanent Collections." Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ Columbus, sailing back to Spain in 1493, wrote a letter to Ferdinand and Isabella describing his encounter with the islands in the "western sea." Three of the earliest copies of the letter, printed in Latin, are on view. Through Nov. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—In "New Worlds, Ancient Texts," more than two hundred manuscripts, maps, atlases, globes, books, and prints tell the story of the Old World and the New World—how they came to meet, their courtship, their quarrels, and their inevitable marriage. Through Jan. 9. (Gottesman Hall. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.). . . ¶ Maps and atlases of yesteryear, as "Mapping the New World" demonstrates, were certainly more fanciful than today's A.A.A. road maps. The show reveals the fertile imagination of European mapmakers, who incorporated palm trees, double-spouted whales, cannibals, and other exotic things into their works. Through Jan. 9. (Edna Barnes Salomon Room. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.). . .¶ On view in the Berg Collection are fifty manuscripts, including fragments from "Oliver Twist," "Tropic of Cancer," "To the Lighthouse," and "Ada." (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

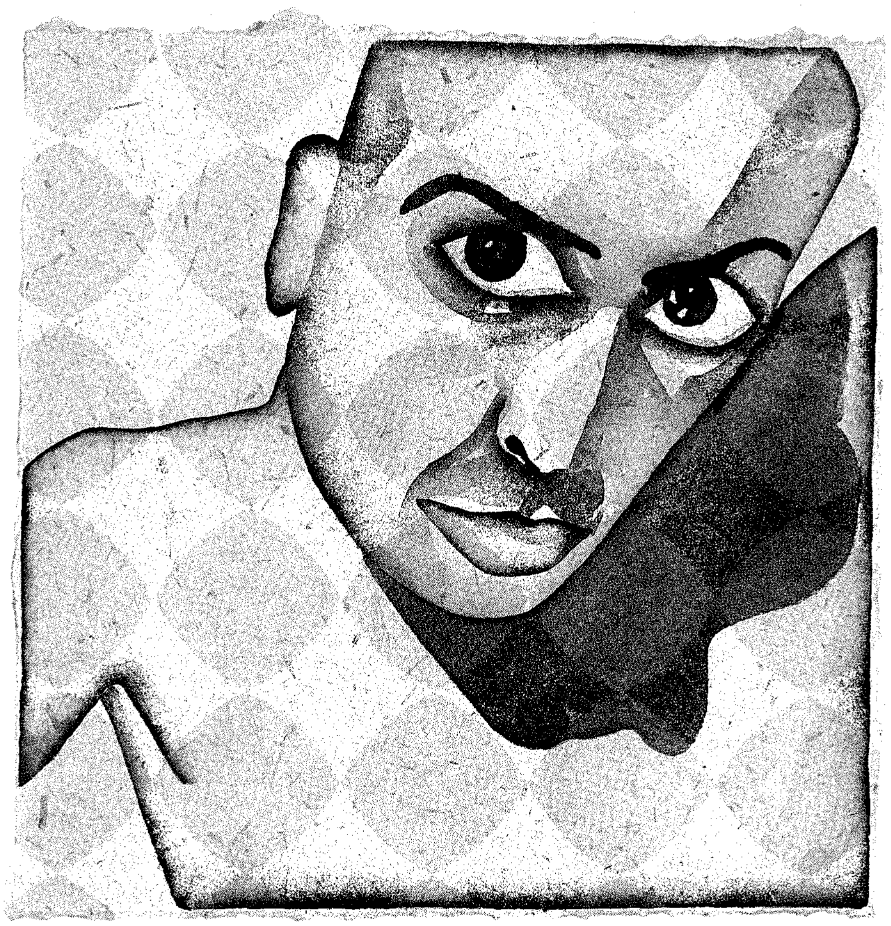
(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Ellsworth Kelly—Kelly, a supreme abstractionist, is also one of the best things ever to have happened to the plant kingdom: his botanical sketches are truly exquisite—as piercingly simple, crystalline, and intense as his nonobjective paintings. Ruskin's advice to young Pre-Raphaelites—to look at the world as if through lidless eyes—could plausibly have been the credo of this sixty-nine-year-old Yankee literalist. The poet John Ashbery, Kelly's neighbor in the Hudson River Valley, wrote the catalogue essay. Through Nov. 28. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Short List—fernando botero, Weintraub, 988 Madison Ave., at 77th St. (through Nov. 28); **stephen de staebler,** CDS Gallery, 76 E. 79th St. (open Sundays, noon to 3, through Nov. 21); **john hoyland,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through Nov. 8); **wifredo lam,** Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. (opens daily, except Mondays, at noon; through Dec. 20); **henri matisse,** La Boetie, 9 E. 82nd St. (through Oct. 31); **larry poons** and **marsden hartley,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 31); **fairfield porter,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through Oct. 31); **katherine porter,** Munroe, 9 E. 84th St. (opens at noon, closed Tuesdays, through Nov. 14); **frank stella,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Nov. 12).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Short List—vanessa bell, Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through Nov. 7); **isabel bishop** and **robert kushner,** Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 14); **katherine bowling,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **joan brown,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 14); **morris graves,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (opens Saturdays at noon, through Oct. 24); **john hull,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **reuben kadish,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 7), and Einstein, 591 Broadway (through Nov. 21); **käthe kollwitz,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **jane laudi,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **james lechay,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **henry moore,** Heidenberg, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 24); **sylvia sleigh,** Stiebel, 32 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 14); **george tooker,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 5); **jack tworkov** and **al held,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 7).



Self-portrait by Francesco Clemente

GALLERIES—SoHo

Francesco Clemente—These spirited watercolors, made in India and Jamaica, are darker, sadder, and more detached than Clemente's work of the late seventies and early eighties, but his phantasmagoric inventiveness has not deserted him: there is no lack of leaping dancers, contortionists, bestraddled phalluses, and leafy landscapes. Through Oct. 31. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

David Dupuis—An uneven show by a potentially interesting young abstract artist. The paintings—paper on canvas with acrylic—are maniacal labyrinths in shallow relief. The *successful ones are very likable, if also a little* pat. There are some strong drawings on display that show doodles to be at the root of the paintings. Reassuringly, they make [illegible]e insanity of the process more apparent. Through Oct. *31.* (Rubenstein-Diacono, 130 Prince St.)

Carlo Ferraris—Ferraris has worked hard to make his clever, deliberately childlike works look simple. A wood sculpture that should give a sense of weight and stability instead looks as if it were about to float away; it's tethered to the floor by a single piece of string. There is also a fluffy bed of papers seemingly balanced on top of a metal pot. These are simple, joyful works, which sharply contrast with the tension-ridden art in most of the shows around town. Through Oct. 31. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Alexis Rockman—This artist is beginning to hit his stride—his work has become so sumptuous that it is almost overwhelming. The twenty-four-foot painting that is the centerpiece of this show is filled with hundreds of hybrid animal species—fish, flesh, and fowl crazily intermixed—posed, in a swamp, as if for an informal class portrait. In scale and sheer profusion of imagery, Rockman is reckoning with classic history painting and with the universal tableaux of the grand moralist Bosch. But he has yet to make any genuine allegorical commitments. Now that he has gathered all these inventive mutants into one magnificent primordial landscape, he needs to decide what it is he wants them to communicate. Through Nov. 28. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

Peter Schuyff—Once again, Schuyff is showing paintings that are good-natured, seductive, and essentially vapid. Schuyff's paintings are best when he comes close to failure yet just manages to pull a rabbit out of his floppy hat, as he has done with the two smaller canvases on view. They're formulaic, but at least they show some sense of light and color. The ten-panel work that is the central point of the show—an exercise in uniformity and difference—is the embodiment of boredom. Through Oct. 24. (Kasmin, 74 Grand St.)

Robert Williams—This is the first SoHo solo show of a prolific artist who was one of the founders of Zap Comix. In these cartoon paintings, he creates endlessly inventive, jam-packed struggles of the freaky funky kind. Strangely enough, though, his paintings are technically dry, and they don't hold together very well when compared to the antics of, say, Chicago's Hairy Who. At times, the artist's zippy signature and his frantically clever titles and subtitles are the best parts of his work. Through Nov. 21. (Cutler, 379 West Broadway.)

"Rewards of Labor—the W.P.A. Spirit"—And spirited it is. The W.P.A. granted opportunities to artists who didn't have many, and most of the artists included here will be new to many viewers. The emphasis is on diligent drawings and prints of an America struggling out of the Great Depression—workers, factories, and urban construction. There are also some charming sculptures, including gregarious, decorative figural groups by Anita Weschler, as well as studies for José Maria Sert's heroic murals at Rockefeller Center. But the spirit is perhaps best expressed in a mural by Abraham Joel Tobias, which has recently been recovered from Midwood High School in Brooklyn. Titled "The Triumph of Science Over Charlatanism," it attempts to combine the figurative W.P.A. style with mystical modernist abstraction, in an allegory that is charming in its confused hokiness. Through Oct. 31. (Berman-Daferner, 568 Broadway.)

Short List—**TONY BERLANT,** Louver, 130 Prince St. (through Nov. 14); **POWER BOOTHE,** Morrison, 59 Thompson St. (through Nov. 21); **ROBERT BORDO,** Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Nov. 14); **CHUCK CONNELLY,** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through Nov. 14); **WIM DELVOYE,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through Nov. 7); **JESSICA DIAMOND,** American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster St. (through Oct. 31); **NANCY DWYER,** Baer, at 476 Broome St. (through Nov. 28); **CHRISTIAN ECKART,** RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway (through Nov. 18); **STEPHEN ELLIS,** Koury, 89 Greene St. (through Nov. 14); **APRIL GORNIK,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through Nov. 14); **DUANE HANSON,** Helander, 415 West Broadway (through Nov. 2); **CANDIDA HÖFER,** Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (opens at noon, through Oct. 31); **FELIX STEPHAN HUBER,** Good, 532 Broadway (through Nov. 7); **MARK INNERST,** Marcus, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 31); **LOREN MUNK,** Zarre, 154 Wooster St. (through Nov. 7); **JOEL OTTERSON,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. (through Nov. 7); **ADRIAN PIPER,** Cooper, 149 Wooster St. and Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. (through Oct. 31); **KENNY SCHARF,** Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through Oct. 24); **ROSALIND SCHNEIDER,** SoHo 20, 469 Broome St. (through Oct. 24); **JIM SHAW,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through Nov. 7); **JOAN SNYDER,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 31); **BUZZ SPECTOR,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Nov. 14); **MICHELLE STUART,** Fawbush, 76 Grand St. (through Nov. 14); **THOMAS TROSCH,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Oct. 31); **CHRISTOPHER WOOL,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. (through Nov. 14).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Second Nature

Late October is a time when even die-hard city-dwellers get their flash of nature's artistry, as the city's trees finally get cold enough to change color. But even on a rainy day there are breathtaking trees to be seen in town right now—in a photograph by Alexander Rodchenko that is included in a comprehensive exhibition of Russian avant-garde works at the Houk Friedman gallery (1094 Madison Avenue, at 82nd Street). The show spills over into the Barry Friedman gallery (1117 Madison, at 83rd Street; both through November 7).

Rodchenko's photograph, taken in 1927, is a small black-and-white print, but it's as visually exciting as seeing an entire landscape aflame in autumn tones. The image is of a few pines in Russia's Pushkin Forest, and it's full of Rodchenko's famous dynamism: the trunks of the trees seem to shoot up into the sky at such dramatic angles that they appear to have no roots in the earth. And the picture is utterly devoid of the sentimentality that often schmalzes up photographs of trees.

Anne Hall—Photographs of sixty-three artists from *The New Yorker*, including Charles Addams, Roz Chast, George Booth, Ed Koren, and Gretchen Dow Simpson. Through Nov. 27. (Sea Cliff gallery, 310 Sea Cliff Ave., Sea Cliff, New York. Open Sundays.)

William Klein—Photos from Klein's exciting books from the late fifties and early sixties, along with some on-target fashion photographs, eighties color pictures of people lazing on European beaches, and large blowups of contact sheets from the past few years. Through Oct. 24. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Sandy Skoglund—The three pieces here are typical Skoglund: photographs with complementary installations that involve an over-the-top combination of sculpture, mannequins, and glued-on elements. The results are both spooky and hilarious. The main ingredients in the three works are smoked bacon strips, Cheez Doodles, and raisins. In each work, the interplay between the photos, which depict real people, and the environments, which employ mannequins, is what gives Skoglund's art its final decorator-gone-haywire touch. Through Oct. 31. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

Short List—**GEOFFREY BIDDLE,** Perry, 472 Broome St. (through Oct. 24); **JOHN BLAKEMORE,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Nov. 14); **HARRY CALLAHAN,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 24); **NANCY CRAMPTON,** La Maison Française, New York University, 16 Washington Mews (through Oct. 31); **LYNN DAVIS,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 31); **RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD,** 292 Gallery, 120 Wooster St. (through Oct. 24); **DUANE MICHALS** and **LOIS GREENFIELD,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; both shows through Nov. 8); **SARAH MOON,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through Oct. 24); **MARIO CRAVO NETO,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Oct. 24); **IZHAR PATKIN** and **NAM JUNE PAIK,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 21); **CHARLES SCHENK,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Oct. 24); **VICTOR SKREBNESKI,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 24); **AARON SISKIND,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. (through Nov. 21), and Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 24); **KARL STRUSS,** Drake, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 7); **PHILIP TRAGER,** Saul, 155 Spring St. (through Nov. 14).

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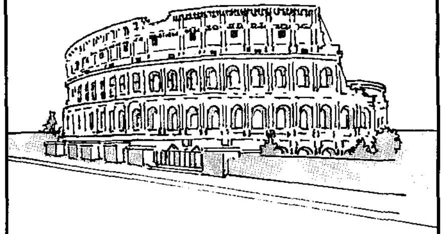

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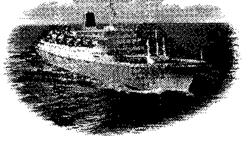

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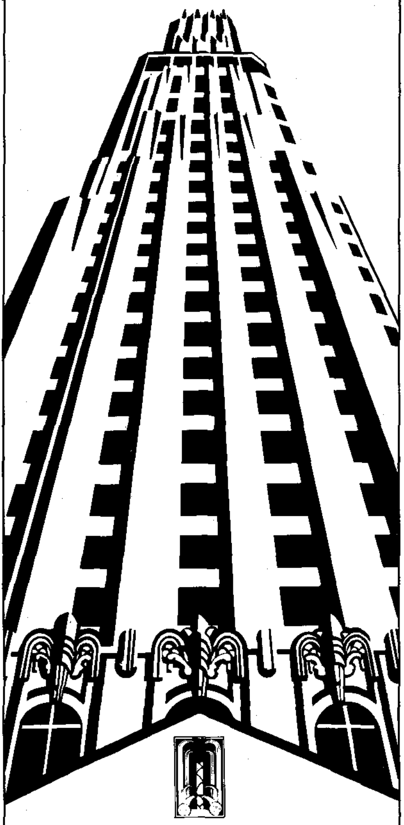

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MUSIC

Coming of Age

ONE reminder of how fast the years go by is the fact that Midori is now a grownup. The young violinist is still billed by a single name, like a pop phenomenon, but that is the extent of her exoticism these days. She makes the circuit with all the other mainstream star soloists; her repertoire is conservative, her performing style middle-of-the-road. This strategy can be dangerous for a prodigy, because as precocity and the perception of unspoiled innocence yield to time and exposure, point of view becomes more and more important. Unlike, say, Yevgeny Kissin (not to mention the young Glenn Gould or Yehudi Menuhin), Midori didn't make her early impression on the basis of any particular personal expressiveness; she made it on poise and technical acumen. These are still formidably in place, but recently she gave some performances of Mendelssohn's familiar Violin Concerto, with the New York Philharmonic, that suggested that something else is coming into her playing. There was an active intent—a sense of statement within her graceful phrasing—that didn't use to be there.

It's too early to say whether Midori will become a significant artist (many prodigies, perhaps most, continue for years as more or less effective former prodigies), but the recent Mendelssohn has made her upcoming recital at Avery Fisher Hall (October 25, at 3) more inviting. It's faintly disappointing that her sonata partner is Robert McDonald—not that he isn't an excellent pianist (he is), but he's best and rightly known as a mainstream, seal-of-approval violinist's pianist. He'll know how to support her consummately, though, and that counts.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—TOSCA, with Ghena Dimitrova, Luciano Pavarotti, and Alain Fondary; conducted by Christian Badea. (Oct. 19 and Oct. 27 at 8, and Oct. 24 at 8:30.)... FALSTAFF, with Mirella Freni, Barbara Bonney, Marilyn Horne, Paul Plishka, Stanford Olsen, and Bruno Pola; James Levine. (Oct. 20 at 8.)... With John Keenan conducting. (Oct. 23 at 8.)... THE VOYAGE, a Columbus-inspired operatic epic by Philip Glass, with a cast that includes Patricia Schuman and Tatiana Troyanos, among many others; Bruce Ferden. (Oct. 21 and Oct. 28 at 8, and Oct. 24 at 1.)... MADAMA BUTTERFLY, with Yoko Watanabe, Wendy White, Michael Sylvester, and Juan Pons; Julius Rudel. (Oct. 22 at 8.)... SEMIRAMIDE, by Rossini, with Christine Weidinger, Gloria Scalchi, Frank Lopardo, and Barseg Tumanyan; Ion Marin. (Oct. 26 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

New York City Opera—REGINA, with Leigh Munro, Sheryl Woods, LeRoy Lehr, Andrew Wentzel, and Ron Baker; conducted by Laurie Anne Hunter. (Oct. 20 at 8 and Oct. 24 at 1:30.)... DIE FLEDERMAUS, sung in English, with Cynthia Lawrence, Cecelia Wasson, Robert Brubaker, and Robert Orth; Mark Gibson. (Oct. 21 and Oct. 24 at 8.)... THE MAGIC FLUTE, sung in English, with Elizabeth Futral, Linda Louise Kelley, Paul Austin Kelly, Matthew Lau, and John Calvin West; Scott Bergeson. (Oct. 23 and Oct. 27 at 8.)... CARMEN, with Robynne Redmon, Christiane Riel, Antonio Barasorda, and Harry Dworchak; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Oct. 25 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 20 at 7:30: Michael Morgan conducts the première of Daron Hagen's "Philharmonia (A Fanfare)," Brahms' Serenade No. 2, Kodály's "Dances of Galánta," and Grieg's Piano Concerto (with Garrick Ohlsson).... ¶ Oct. 22 and Oct. 24 at 8, Oct. 23 at 11 A.M., and Oct. 27 at 7:30: Kurt Masur conducts Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 and incidental music to "Egmont" (with soprano Sylvia McNair and narrator Nico Castel).

Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro alla Scala—Riccardo Muti directs Verdi's Requiem, with soloists Maria Dragoni (soprano), Lucia D'Intino (mezzo-soprano), Richard Leech (tenor), and Samuel Ramey (bass). (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 21 and Oct. 23 at 8.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Lukas Foss conducts his own "Baroque Variations" in addition to Bernstein's "Three Meditations" (featuring cellist Fred Sherry), Cage's "Atlas Eclipticalis," Copland's "El Salón México," Morton Gould's "Festive Music" (featuring trumpeter Sergei Nakarakov), and Stravinsky's "Symphonies of Wind Instruments." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Oct. 23-24 at 8.)

New York Virtuoso Singers—Harold Rosenbaum directs Bach's six motets, with the continuo entrusted to baroque cellist Myron Lutzke and organist Walter Hilse. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 24 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Honegger's Symphony No. 4 ("Deliciae Basilienses"), Martinů's Double Concerto for String Orchestra, and Arvo Pärt's "Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Oct. 24 at 8 and Oct. 25 at 3.)

Middle Haydn—Alexander Schneider conducts a chamber orchestra in symphonies from Haydn's Sturm-und-Drang period: No. 31 (the "Horn Signal"), No. 46, No. 44 (the "Trauersymphonie"), and No. 49 ("La Passione"). (New School Auditorium, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. Oct. 25 at 2.)

New York Virtuosi Chamber Symphony—Did someone say Haydn's "La Passione" Symphony? It may not turn up at all for the rest of the season, yet while Alexander Schneider is conducting it downtown, Kenneth Klein will be overseeing it five miles to the north, on a program that also includes Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga's D-Minor Symphony, Copland's "Latin American Sketches," and the première of Robert Baksa's Harpsichord Concerto (with Elaine Comparone). (Miller Theatre. Oct. 25 at 3.)

Riverside Symphony—George Rothman conducts Sibelius' Symphony No. 4, Stravinsky's "Jeu de Cartes," and Szymanowski's "Symphonie Concertante" (featuring pianist Gail Niwa). (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 26 at 8.)

Saint Thomas Choir—Gerre Hancock directs an all-Britten concert that includes his "Saint Nicolas" and "Psalm 150"; with tenor Jeffrey Thomas and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013, ext. 303. Oct. 27 at 7:30.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—Roger Norrington conducts Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3, Symphony No. 5, and Violin Concerto (with Thomas Zehetmair). (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 28 at 8.)

New York Bach Ensemble—Kent Tritle leads the period-instrument players in Bach's Cantatas No. 56 (the "Kreuzstab," with bass Frank Nemhauser and oboist Stephen Hammer) and No. 210 (with soprano Maureen Haley, Mr. Hammer, and flutist Sandra Miller) and a Handel organ concerto (featuring Christopher Creaghan). (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 439-8044. Oct. 28 at 8.)

Clarion Concerts—Newell Jenkins directs music by Monteverdi and his contemporaries, with soprano Julianne Baird and tenor Steven Tharp among the soloists. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 28 at 8.)

RECITALS

Escape to St. Bart's—Oct. 20 at 6: Flutist Barbara Siesel and pianist David Buechner. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 6: Pianist Elyane Laussade. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Admission by contribution.)

New Music Consort—Music by women: Sofia Gubaidulina, Chen Yi, Ada Gentile, Lori Dobbins, and Joan Tower (her "Platinum Spirals," for solo violin). (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 21 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Bargemusic—Tartini's "Devil's Trill" Sonata and a pair of piano quartets (by Mendelssohn and Strauss). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Oct. 22 at 6:30 and Oct. 25 at 4, the Thursday concert being a benefit, by candlelight.)

David Thomas and Malcolm Bilson—The baritone and the pianist perform Schubert's "Die Winterreise," in a program that will also include several of the composer's solo-piano works (all performed on a Graff instrument built in Germany, in 1824.) (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 22 at 8.)

Trio Fontenay—Performing piano trios by Haydn, Brahms (in A Major), and Schumann (in F Major). (Miller Theatre. Oct. 22 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—The group's new violinist, Ida Kavafian, joins cellist Peter Wiley and Menahem Pressler (the group's pianist since its founding, in 1955) to play Brahms' B-Major Trio, the New York première of George Rochberg's "Summer, 1990," and Fauré's G-Minor Piano Quartet (in which violist Lawrence Dutton will assist). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 23 at 8.)

Benjamin Luxon—The baritone performs songs by Schubert, Loewe, and Wolf; with pianist David Willison. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Oct. 23 at 8.)

Mutantrumpet Concert—Ben Neill performs on an instrument of his invention: it sports three bells, two sets of valves, and a slide, a set-up that enables him to produce (and combine) a wider range of timbres than does your basic, garden-variety trumpet. Featured on the program is his "Downwind," a narrative work that jointly memorializes women suffering from pollution in Ohio and the eighteenth-century trumpet virtuoso Gottfried Reiche, who died when he inhaled deeply while standing too close to the lighting source at a torch-lit concert. (We're not making this up, you know.) Several colleagues assist, including a second mutantrumpeter, Jim Donato. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway, second floor. Oct. 23-24 at 8. For information about tickets, call 966-9520.)

Avant-Garde Piano Festival—The opening concerts of series that employ the piano in non-traditional ways. Oct. 23 at 9: David Lopato, performing on prepared and unprepared pianos. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 9: Michael Harrison plays a new work for a grand piano tuned in just intonation, with twenty-four notes per octave. (Roulette, 228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Through Nov. 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—The foursome embarks on a season-long survey of Beethoven's string-quartet compositions. The first installment comprises early, middle, and late quartets: the G-Major (Op. 18, No. 2), the C-Major (Op. 59, No. 3), and the E-Flat-Major (Op.

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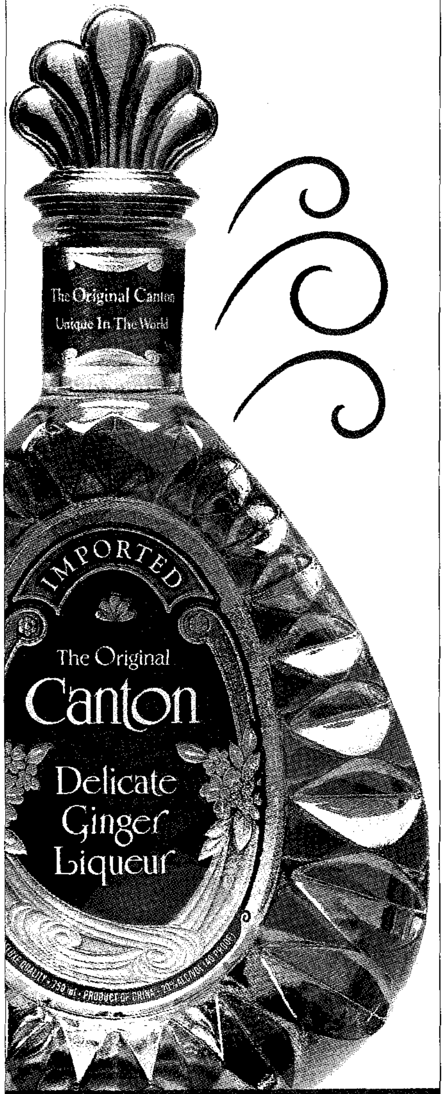

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MUSIC—Cont'd

127). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 24 at 8.)

Midori—The violinist performs sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven, and Elgar, in addition to short works by Debussy and Sarasate; with pianist Robert McDonald. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 25 at 3.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra play chamber music by Beethoven, Fauré, Christian Sinding, and Joelle Wallach (a première). (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 25 at 3.)

Yevgeny Mogilevsky—The pianist performs his New York début, which has been a long time coming. He first approached the brink of international recognition in 1964, when, at the age of eighteen, he won first prize in the Queen Elizabeth Competition, in Belgium; and nine years later, his recording of Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto filtered out to the West, where it provoked critical accolades. But Soviet politics interfered incessantly, and a passport remained out of reach until recently. His introductory program is far from bashful: Schumann's "Arabeske" (Op. 18) and "Kreisleriana (Op. 16), Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit," and Prokofiev's Sonata No. 8. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 25 at 3.)

Pieter Wispelwey—Cellist, in his New York début, playing two of Bach's unaccompanied suites and (with pianist Lois Shapiro) two sonatas by Brahms—his Cello Sonata *No. 2 (in F-Major, Op. 99) plus the composer's* own transcription of his G-Major Violin Sonata (Op. 78). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Oct. 25 at 5.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Chamber works and small-scale concertos by Bach, Mendelssohn, and Prokofiev. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 25 at 5 and Oct. 27 at 7:30.)

Dawn Upshaw and Richard Goode—The soprano and the pianist perform songs by Haydn, Schumann (his "Liederkreis," Op. 39), and Mussorgsky. Mr. Goode will also perform a Haydn sonata and Debussy's "Children's Corner Suite." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Oct. 25 at 8.)

Carter Brey and Jeffrey Swann—The cellist and the pianist perform Beethoven and Grieg sonatas, among other works. A benefit concert. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. *Oct. 25 at 8. Tickets at the door* on the night of the concert.)

Figueroa Trio—Three members of Puerto Rico's musical family—pianist Yvonne, violinist Guillermo, and cellist Rafael—perform trios by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Shostakovich, and German Caceres. Presented by Musica de Camara. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 25 at 8.)

Kenneth Gilbert—The eminent Canadian harpsichordist, long a resident of Paris, who (curiously) has not previously performed in New York, opens the International Harpsichord Festival with a program that includes Bach's D-Major Partita, keyboard arrangements of movements from Rameau's opera "Pygmalion," and the D-Major Suite from the 1689 "Pièces de Clavecin" by Louis XIV's cross-eyed court harpsichordist Jean-Henri D'Anglebert. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 26 at 8.)

Lark String Quartet—Playing quartets by Beethoven, Shostakovich, and Borodin. A benefit concert. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Oct. 26 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Tokyo String Quartet—Performing Haydn's String Quartet in B-Flat (Op. 76, No. 4, the "Sunrise"), Ezra Laderman's "Kreeger" Piano Quintet (with the help of Ilana Vered), and Schubert's C-Major String Quintet (with cellist Sharon Robinson assisting). (92nd Street Y. Oct. 27-28 at 8.)

Eugen Indjic—Pianist, performing Schumann's "Davidsbündlertänze," Prokofiev's Second Sonata, and works by Chopin. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 28 at 8.)

Da Capo Chamber Players—Performing Brahms' A-Major Trio; Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp; and works by Nicholas Maw (including his "Ghost Dances"). (Miller Theatre. Oct. 28 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Def Leppard—Compared with Van Halen, Bon Jovi, or Warrant—oh, who cares? This English band purveys middleweight metal and hook-festooned pop, and sells many millions of units to a young male demographic. They're serious businessmen and nice guys, and their product is precise. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Oct. 27 at 8.)

Reba McEntire—The President likes her, old-timers like her, young country Turks like Travis Tritt like her. Hell, even we like her. After getting a divorce and losing eight band members and tour employees in an airplane crash, Reba recorded an album with ten straight sad songs in a row. She's plucky, ambitious, and smart as a whip. All of t[illegible]se

Def Leppard

country-music virtues pour out of her, and she puts on a great show. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 23-24 at 8.)

Sugar—After a prolific career with the Minneapolis band Hüsker Dü, guitarist and singer Bob Mould released two solo albums, and then formed this trio. It's a real band. Sugar's first album, "Copper Blue," is a furious and enthralling rock album, and a college-radio hit. They're even better live. (Academy Theatre, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. Oct. 23 at 8.)

Erasure—Stratospheric, unearthly camp put across in an already legendary production-number extravaganza. According to singer Andy Bell, who, together with synthesizer god Vince Clark, performs in a swirl of dancers and costume changes, "the idea was to have something that was both a bit tainted and also like a Victorian version of what the modern world was going to be." Brace yourself for a giant swan on wheels; dancers dressed as cowboys, stars, and planets; and Abba songs galore. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 27-28 at 8. Through Nov. 7.)

Manhattan School of Music Jazz Orchestra—Borden Auditorium, MSM, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 20 at 8. No tickets necessary.

They Might Be Giants—With the A-Bones (Oct. 20); Robin Holcomb (Oct. 21); and Drink Me (Oct. 22). (Variety Arts Theatre, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. Concerts at 7.)

Kitaro—Radio City Music Hall. Oct. 21-22 at 8.

Cabaret Convention—Presented by the Mabel Mercer Foundation. A number of top-notch cabaret singers perform each night. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 21-24 at 6 and Oct. 25 at 3.)

Tom Hamilton and J. D. Parran—Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. Oct. 21 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

"Saxophone Summit"—Flip Phillips, Herb Harris, Plas Johnson, Grover Washington, Jr., and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 22 at 8.)

Billy Taylor Trio—With Gerry Mulligan. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 22 at 7.)

Yerevan Women's Chorus of Armenia—Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Oct. 23 at 8.

The Samples—Academy Theatre. Oct. 24 at 8.

Sonic Youth—With the Boredoms and the John Spencer Blues Explosion. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Oct. 24 at 8.)

Grover Washington, Jr.—With Angela Bofill. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 24 at 8.)

Salsa Festival—Celia Cruz, Tony Vega, Eddie Palmieri, et al. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 24 at 8.)

Jazz Contest—The Thelonious Monk International Jazz Instrumental Competition, which is devoted to drummers this year. Fifteen young musicans from five countries will participate. (Semi-finals at Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050, Oct. 24 at 2. . . . ¶ Finals at Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030, Oct. 25 at 7.)

Alhambra—Medieval Judeo-Spanish folk music. (Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. Oct. 25 at 2. For information about tickets, call 399-3357.)

Cher—In concerts rescheduled from last spring. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 27-28 at 8. Through Nov. 1.)

"Cabaret Comes to Carnegie"—Oct. 21: Marcia Lewis. . . . ¶ Oct. 28: KT Sullivan. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. Concerts at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Vs. the Washington Capitals, Oct. 21. . . . ¶ Vs. the Montreal Canadiens, Oct. 23. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Oct. 26. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Oct. 24. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Kings, Oct. 27. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Oct. 20. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Oct. 24. (Game time, 7:35.)

(The Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. Starts Oct. 21. . . . At the Meadowlands: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Mondays through Saturdays at 8 and Tuesdays at 1; Sundays at 6:45.

CHAMPIONSHIP—BASEBALL

World Series—The Toronto Blue Jays vs. the Atlanta Braves, in the annual affair. In Atlanta, Oct. 18, and, if necessary, Oct. 24-25. In Toronto, Oct. 20-21, and, if necessary, Oct. 22. Game time, 8:30. All games on CBS.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Poets' Corner—On Oct. 25 at 7, Edith Wharton and William Carlos Williams will be inducted into the Poets' Corner at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. The Cathedral's majestic unstuffiness is a perfect setting for both writers' piercing, lyrical observations. During the Vespers service, selections from Wharton's work will be read by Louis Auchincloss and Mary Gordon. James Laughlin and Charles Tomlinson will read from Williams' poems. No tickets necessary.

Caribbean Poetry Festival—Twelve organizations around New York, from the Poetry Society of America to the Nuyorican Poets Café, are sponsoring three days (Oct. 22-24) of readings and panel discussions. Nine poets, including Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott, will read at the National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S., on Oct. 23, at 7. Call 254-9628 for schedule and location information.

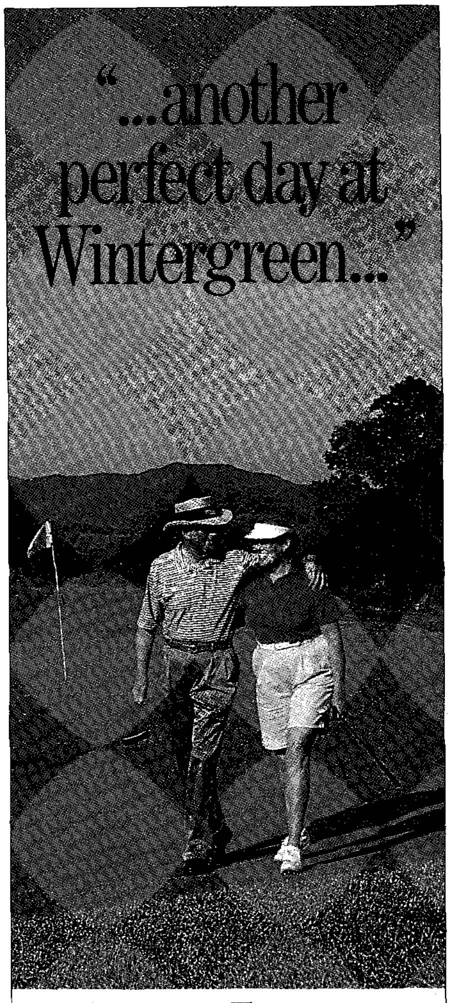
Words—Oct. 21 at 7: Mona Simpson, Stanley Crouch, Linda Gregg, and Amy Wilentz will read from their own work. (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 8: Gloria Naylor reads from her new novel, "Bailey's Cafe." (Three Lives & Company, 154 W. 10th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 26: Gary Snyder will read from his own poetry at 8:30; he will be interviewed beforehand, by Eliot Weinberger, at 6. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 8: Former Cars band member Ric Ocasek and *Cover* magazine publisher Jeff Wright read from their own work. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. and 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 7: Diane Williams and A. M. Homes read from their own work. (Limbo, 47 Ave. A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Oct. 23 at 8: Arthur Liebman will present a slide-show-cum-lecture on Dracula, from the fifteenth century to the present, complete with creepy background music. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5620.)

Walks & Tours—Oct. 25 at noon: Indulge in bialys, dim sum, and canoli on the "Multi-Ethnic Eating Tour," sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours. For reservations, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 1: The Leon Trotsky-Abbie Hoffman-Madonna Tour, sponsored by Radical Walking Tours. For more information, call 1-718 492-0069.

Antiques—Sanford Smith's Fall Antiques show. (Pier 92, Twelfth Ave. at 52nd St. Oct. 22-24, from 11 to 9, and Oct. 25, from 11 to 6. For more information, call 777-5218.). . . ¶ The International Fine Art & Antique Dealers Show. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Avenue at 66th St. Oct. 24-28, from 11 to 8. For more information, call 382-0969).

Memorandum—Daylight-savings time ends on Oct. 25 at 2 A.M. Turn the clocks back one hour.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 28.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enchanted April" (†).
Theatre 2: "Light Sleeper" (directed by Paul Schrader), with Willem Dafoe and Susan Sarandon.
Theatre 3: "Night on Earth" (Jim Jarmusch).
Theatre 4: (Separate admissions) "Alberto Express" (Arthur Joffe), with Sergio Castellitto; and "Mistress" (Barry Primus), with Robert Wuhl.
Theatre 5: "Simple Men" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke and William Sage.
Theatre 6: Through Oct. 22: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French). From Oct. 23: "In the Soup" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Oct. 22: "American Fabulous" (Reno Dakota), a documentary on Jeffrey Strouth.
Oct. 23: (Separate admissions) "Trust" (1990, Hal Hartley), with Adrienne Shelley and Martin Donovan; and "American Fabulous."
Oct. 24: (Separate admissions) "Trust"; "Speaking Parts" (1989, Atom Egoyan); "Poison" (1991, Todd Haynes); and "American Fabulous."
Oct. 25: (Separate admissions) "The Unbelievable Truth" (1989, Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke; "Boyz N the Hood" (1991, John Singleton); "Poison"; and "American Fabulous."
Oct. 26: Theatre closed.
Oct. 27: (Separate admissions) "Speaking Parts"; and "American Fabulous."
Oct. 28: (Separate admissions) "The Unbelievable Truth"; and "American Fabulous."

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).
Theatre 3: "Husbands and Wives" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser. From Oct. 23: "Reservoir Dogs" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blade Runner" (1982, Ridley Scott), with Harrison Ford.
Theatre 4: "A River Runs Through It" (†).
Theatre 5: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal, Tommy Lee Jones, and Gary Busey.
Theatre 6: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).
Theatre 7: "Singles" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†). From Oct. 23: "Zebrahead" (Anthony Drazan), with Michael Rapaport.
Theatre 3: "Deadly Currents" (Simcha Jacobovici), a documentary.
Theatre 4: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 5: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 6: "Sarafina!" (†).
Theatre 7: Through Oct. 22: "Gas Food Lodging" (Allison Anders). From Oct. 23: "The Panama Deception" (Barbara Trent), a documentary.

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Husbands and Wives" (†).
Theatre 2: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 3: "Bob Roberts" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 22: "Husbands and Wives" (†). From Oct. 23: "Zebrahead" (Anthony Drazan), with Michael Rapaport.
Theatre 5: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 6: "Candyman" (†).

Steve Buscemi in "In the Soup"

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Player" (Robert Altman), with Tim Robbins.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 3: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 22: "Sarafina!" (†). From Oct. 23: "Zebrahead" (Anthony Drazan), with Michael Rapaport.

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal, Tommy Lee Jones, and Gary Busey.
Theatre 2: "School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.
Theatre 3: "Hero" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Public Eye" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Double Edge" (Amos Kollek), with Faye Dunaway.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Bob Roberts" (†).
Theatre 2: "Simple Men" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke and William Sage.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through Oct. 20: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
From Oct. 21: Ninth Israel Film Festival.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Unforgiven" (†).
Theatre 2: "South Central" (Steve Anderson), with Glenn Plummer and Carl Lumbly.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Oct. 22: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.
From Oct. 23: "Zebrahead" (Anthony Drazan), with Michael Rapaport.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Night and the City" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†). From Oct. 23: "In the Soup" (†).
Theatre 3: "Enchanted April" (†).

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
Through Oct. 22: "Mistress" (Barry Primus), with Robert Wuhl.
From Oct. 23: To be announced.

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Public Eye" (†).
Theatre 4: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 5: "Singles" (†).
Theatre 6: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Husbands and Wives" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "A River Runs Through It" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Johnny Stecchino" (Roberto Benigni), with Benigni.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hero" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Husbands and Wives" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Singles" (†). From Oct. 23: "Zebrahead" (Anthony Drazan), with Michael Rapaport.
Theatre 3: "Mr. Saturday Night" (†).
Theatre 4: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).
Theatre 5: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 6: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal, Tommy Lee Jones, and Gary Busey.
Theatre 7: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 2: "Sarafina!" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 20: "Feed" (directed by Kevin Rafferty and James Ridgeway), a documentary. From Oct. 21: "Interpretation of Dreams" (1990, Andrei Zagdansky; in Russian).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Together Alone" (1991, P. J. Castellaneta), with Todd Stites and Terry Curry.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Of Mice and Men" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Honeymoon in Vegas" (Andrew

Bergman), with James Caan, Nicolas Cage, and Sarah Jessica Parker.
Theatre 2: "The Public Eye" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Mr. Saturday Night" (†).
Theatre 2: "Laws of Gravity" (Nick Gomez).
Theatre 3: "Brother's Keeper" (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky), a documentary.
Theatre 4: "Bob Roberts" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal, Tommy Lee Jones, and Gary Busey.
Theatre 2: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Public Eye" (†).
Theatre 4: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).
Theatre 6: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.
Theatre 7: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 8: "Sarafina!" (†).
Theatre 9: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "South Central" (Steve Anderson), with Glenn Plummer and Carl Lumbly.
Theatre 2: "Singles" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Single White Female" (Barbet Schroeder), with Bridget Fonda and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 2: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.
Theatre 4: "The Public Eye" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bob Roberts" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Of Mice and Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "Deadly Currents" (Simcha Jacobovici), a documentary.

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Gas Food Lodging" (Allison Anders).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"A River Runs Through It" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Danzón" (María Novaro; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "A Brief History of Time" (†).
Theatre 3: "Waterland" (Stephen Gyllenhaal), with Jeremy Irons, Ethan Hawke, and Sinead Cusack.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Husbands and Wives" (†).
Theatre 2: "Singles" (†).
Theatre 3: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).
Theatre 4: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 5: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 6: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal, Tommy Lee Jones, and Gary Busey.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Public Eye" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (directed by Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal, Tommy Lee Jones, and Gary Busey.
Theatre 2: "Under Siege."
Theatre 3: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 4: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 5: "Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth" (Anthony Hickox).
Theatre 6: "Innocent Blood" (John Landis), with Anne Parillaud, Robert Loggia, Anthony LaPaglia, and Don Rickles.
Theatre 7: "South Central" (Steve Anderson), with Glenn Plummer and Carl Lumbly.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Oct. 22: "Sarafina!" (†).
From Oct. 23: "Zebrahead" (Anthony Drazan), with Michael Rapaport.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "School Ties" (Robert Mandel), with Brendan Fraser. From Oct. 23: "Sarafina!" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"1492: Conquest of Paradise" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Mr. Baseball" (Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck.
Theatre 2: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through Oct. 20: "Batman Returns" (1992, directed by Tim Burton), with Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Christopher Walken; and "Pee-wee's Big Adventure" (1985, Burton), with Pee-wee Herman.
Oct. 21-22: "Deliverance" (1972, John Boorman), with Jon Voight, Burt Reynolds, Ned Beatty, and Ronny Cox; and "The Road Warrior" (1982, George Miller), with Mel Gibson.
From Oct. 23: Theatre closed.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
"The Honeymoon Killers" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Oct. 19: "The Woman Next Door" (1981, François Truffaut; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant; and "The Story of Adèle H." (1975, Truffaut; in French), with Isabelle Adjani.
Oct. 20: "After the Thin Man" (1936, W. S. Van Dyke), with Myrna Loy, William Powell, James Stewart, and Elissa Landi; and "The Thin Man" (1934, Van Dyke), with Loy and Powell.
Oct. 21: 'Loves of a Blonde" (1965, Milos Forman; in Czech); and "Ragtime" (1981, Milos Forman), with James Cagney and Howard E. Rollins, Jr.
Oct. 22: "The Fountainhead" (1949, King Vidor), with Gary Cooper, Patricia Neal, and Raymond Massey; and "The V.I.P.s" (1963, Anthony Asquith), with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Maggie Smith, Orson Welles, Margaret Rutherford, Linda Christian, Louis Jourdan, and Rod Taylor.
Oct. 23-24: "Wuthering Heights" (1939, William Wyler), with Merle Oberon, Laurence Olivier, Flora Robson, David Niven, and Geraldine Fitzgerald; and "Jane Eyre" (1944, Robert Stevenson), with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles.
Oct. 25: "Brazil" (1985, Terry Gilliam), with Jonathan Pryce, Kim Greist, Robert De Niro, Katherine Helmond, Michael Palin, Ian Holm, Ian Richardson, and Kathryn Pogson; and "RoboCop" (1987, Paul Verhoeven), with Peter Weller, Nancy Allen, and Kurtwood Smith.
Oct. 26: "L'Avventura" (1959, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti, and Léa Massari; and "L'Amore" (1948, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani.
Oct. 27: "Macbeth" (1971, Roman Polanski), with Jon Finch; and "Othello" (1965, Stuart Burge), performed by Laurence Olivier and the National Theatre of Great Britain.
Oct. 28: "Topaz" (†); and "Torn Curtain" (1966, Alfred Hitchcock), with Paul Newman and Julie Andrews.

Tribeca Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2570)
Through Oct. 20: "Persona" (1967, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann; and "Shame" (1968, Bergman; in Swedish), with Ullmann, Max von Sydow, and Gunnar Björnstrand.
Oct. 21-22: "Women in Love" (1970, Ken Russell), with Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, Glenda Jackson, and Jennie Linden; and "Far from the Madding Crown" (1967, John Schlesinger), with Julie Christie, Terence Stamp, Peter Finch, and Bates.
Oct. 23-24: "9 1/2 Weeks" (1986, Adrian Lyne), with Mickey Rourke and Kim Basinger; and "Fatal Attraction" (1987, Lyne), with Michael Douglas, Glenn Close, and Anne Archer.
Oct. 25: "L'Amore" (1948, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani; and "Three Brothers" (1982, Francesco Rosi; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret, Michel Placido, and Vittorio Mezzogiorno.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Oct. 19 at 2 "Amarcord" (1974, directed by Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Bruno Zanin. . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 6: "The Double Life of Véronique" (1991, Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter. . . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 2:30 and Oct. 22 at 6: "In the Land of Juliets" (1992, Medhi Charef; in French), with Maria Schneider. . . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 6 and Oct. 22 at 2: "Darling Lili" (1970, Blake Edwards), with Julie Andrews and Rock Hudson. . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 3 and 6: "Confidential: Do Not Duplicate" (1991, Donna Cameron), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 2:30 and Oct. 25 at 5: "How Green Was My Valley" (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 3: "Signed: Lino Brocka" (1987, Christian Blackwood), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 6 and Oct. 24 at 2: "Sunrise" (1927, F. W. Murnau; silent), with Janet Gaynor, George O'Brien, and Margaret Livingston. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 6 and Oct. 24 at 2:30: "All By Myself" (1983, Blackwood), with Eartha Kitt. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 5 and Oct. 25 at 2: "Le Jour Se Lève" ("Daybreak"; 1939, Marcel Carné; in French), with Jean Gabin, Jules Berry, Arletty, and Jacqueline Laurent. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 5: A program of three short films by Blackwood. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 1: "My Life for Zarah Leander" (1986, Blackwood; in German). . . . ¶ Oct. 25-26 at 3: "Nik and Murray" (1986, Blackwood), a documentary; and "Roger Corman: Hollywood's Wild Angel" (1978, Blackwood), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 5:30: "Motel" (1988, Blackwood), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 2:30: "Morocco" (1930, Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich and Gary Cooper. . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 6 and Oct. 27 at 2:30: "Rancho Notorious" (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 6:30: A program of films by Dominic Angerame.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Oct. 20-21 at 2 and 6:30: A program of short films by Michelangelo Antonioni. . . . ¶ Oct. 20-21 at 4:15 and 8:30 and Oct. 22 at 2 and 6:30: "Story of a Love Affair" (see page 28). . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 4:15 and 8:30 and Oct. 23 at 2, 6, and 10: "The Defeated" (1952, Antonioni). . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 4 and 8 and Oct. 24 at 2 and 6:15: "The Lady Without Camelias" (1953, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Lucia Bosè. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 4 and 8:15 and Oct. 25 at 2 and 6:30: "Suicide Attempt" (1953, Antonioni) and "The Girl Friends" (1955, Antonioni). . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 4:15 and 9 and Oct. 26 at 2: "Il Grido" (1957, Antonioni; in Italian), with Steve Cochran, Alida Valli, and Betsy Blair. . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 4:15, Oct. 27 at 2, and Oct. 28 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "L'Avventura" (1959, Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti, and Léa Massari.

AIG Issues Forum

Why reforming our liab America is to succee

EXCESSIVE LIABILITY AWARDS MAKE IT TOUGH FOR U.S. COMPANIES TO COMPETE.

We are a compassionate society. We want to compensate those who have suffered.

But when our courts expand the traditional concepts of liability, causing defendants to pay excessive compensation, we add to the costs we all pay for goods and services. We encourage companies to stop research and development on new products. And we even make it harder for American companies to compete overseas.

PAYING A HIDDEN TAX.

In reality, the American system of liability has become the source of a hidden tax on our economy—a tax that can account for as much as 50% of the price paid for a product.

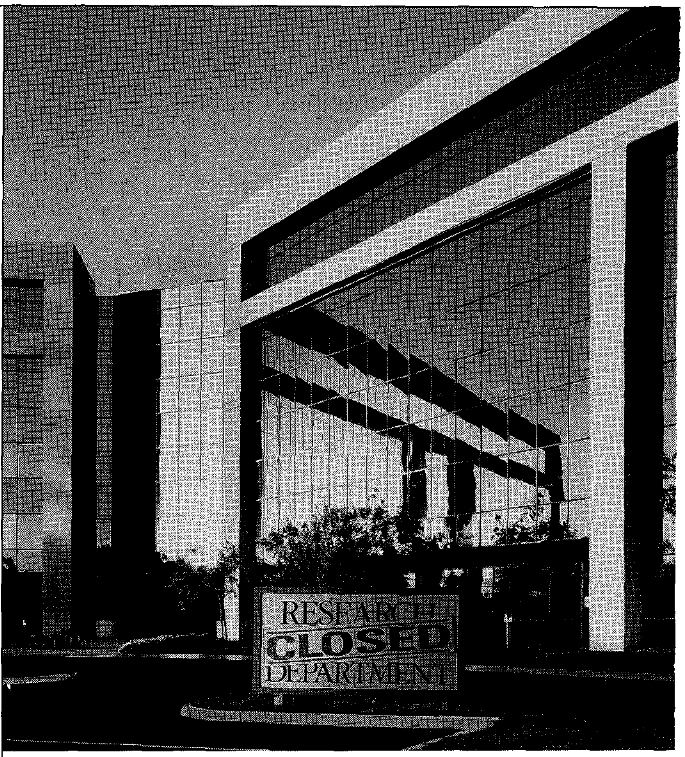
What's worse, it has been estimated that this hidden tax amounts to $80 billion a year—a sum equal to the combined profits of the nation's 200 largest corporations.

Our economic competitors' legal systems do not encourage litigation to the extent we do. Consider, for example, that there are 30 times more lawsuits per capita in the U.S. than in Japan.

Is it any wonder that America is having a tough time competing in overseas markets?

UNCERTAINTY STIFLES ENTERPRISE.

The unpredictability of our liability system is also enormously costly to American competitiveness. For example, in a recent survey of CEOs, the Conference Board found that worry about potential liability lawsuits caused 47% of firms surveyed to discontinue one or more product lines. What's more, 25% stopped certain product research and development, and 39% decided against coming out with a new product. Meanwhile, our overseas competitors continue to research and develop new products at an ever-increasing pace.



ARE WE CONTROLLING RISKS OR INCREASING THEM?

When we give a drunk driver the right to sue an automaker or highway engineer for a million dollars after a crash, are we controlling risk?

Or just encouraging risky and careless behavior?

If you are a manufacturer, you can be sued even if your product has state-of-the-art safety features. Even if your customer misused it against your instructions. Even if the risks of misuse were obvious.

When fear of lawsuits causes physicians to limit

ity system is essential if n overseas markets.

services to patients—or worse, to abandon their practice altogether—lack of adequate treatment means greater risks for everyone.

Is this controlling risk or increasing it?

It's an unhealthy and dangerous situation that needs correcting.

WE MUST REFORM OUR "DEEP POCKETS" APPROACH TO LIABILITY.

Specifically, we need to change our approach and base liability suits on fault.

Our current system often encourages the frivolous suing of those with the ability to pay—in other words, those with "deep pockets." But does it make sense to hold such parties entirely liable, even if they were only minimally at fault?

A MORE RATIONAL APPROACH.

Those who suffer economic losses because of another's negligence should be fairly reimbursed. No one could argue with this principle. There should also be just compensation for pain and suffering resulting from real and severe injuries.

But can we afford to continue a system that encourages litigation and financial judgments bearing little direct relationship to fault or to the actual cost of injuries suffered?

Clearly, a better approach is needed.

CONGRESS HAS A ROLE.

Legislation providing a uniform product liability standard would allow American companies to compete without the burdens of excessive liability risks. And this would unclog the courts and put American business in a stronger position as barriers to international trade and investment fall.

There is proposed legislation before Congress dealing with these issues. A solution to the liability crisis is vital to American competitiveness, and Congress can play a role in restoring the right balance.

SO DO THE COURTS.

When all is said and done, our courts are the interpreters of our laws and our values. It's our values as a society that count, especially as reflected in the courts and individual jury decisions.

Together our legislative and judicial branches must recognize the damage being done to American competitiveness from the current liability system. And help America restore the proper balance.

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MOVIES IN BRIEF

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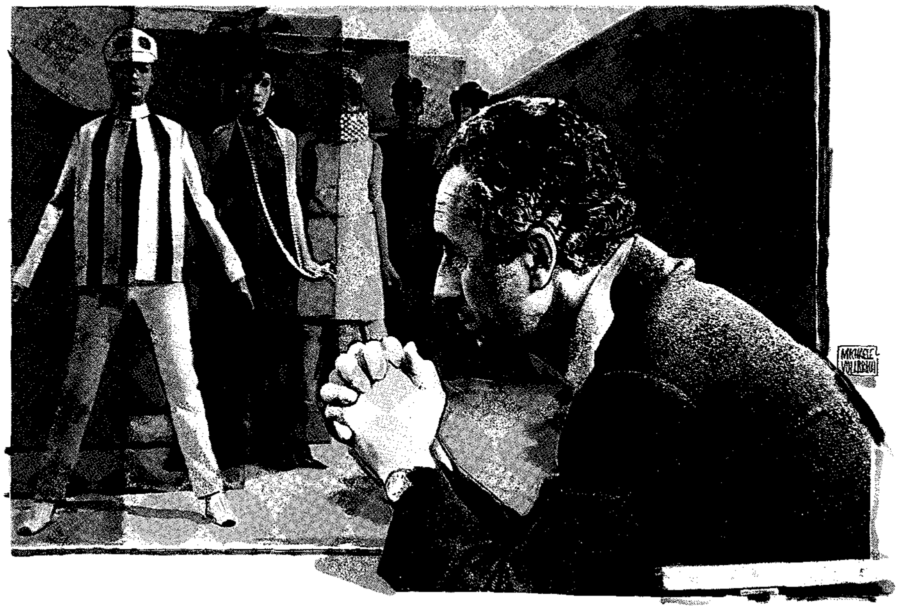


Michelangelo Antonioni

MICHAEL VOLLBRACH

Heart of the Matter

MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI'S 1950 "Story of a Love Affair" (playing October 20-22, at the Walter Reade Theatre) depicts that moment in a romance when the burden of the past destroys the future. The plot is melodramatic—in fact, it resembles "The Postman Always Rings Twice." Yet whenever his doomed lovers lock eyes, Antonioni achieves a melancholy lyricism comparable to F. Scott Fitzgerald's. The lovers are separated both by social class (Guido is unemployed, Paola has married a rich industrialist) and by a shared, unspeakable guilt. Despite his love for Paola, Guido was once engaged to a friend of hers, who died in an elevator accident. Paola and Guido felt responsible. The movie starts seven years later, when a private investigator begins to question the accident. Guido warns Paola, sparking a new cycle of passion and guilt.

In his first feature, Antonioni finds his visual language without stuttering: in the dolorous views of gray Milanese streets, and of weather that's either lowering or about to lower; in the shots that run on a little longer than the immediate action demands. As portrayed by Massimo Girotti, Guido has a perplexing sense of fate—he carries on with Paola (the haughty, charming Lucia Bosè) as if he were determined to play out whatever hand he's dealt. Antonioni was thirty-eight when he made this film, and it stings with the sorrow of a young man learning to distrust his grand passions.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Bob Roberts—Tim Robbins is the writer, director, and star of this mock documentary that chronicles, C-SPAN style, the senatorial campaign of a young radical-right demagogue. Bob Roberts is a folksinger: instead of giving speeches, he picks up an acoustic guitar and invites his audiences to sing along with his reactionary "protest" anthems. He's Pat Buchanan in Woody Guthrie's clothing, and what's scary about the movie is that this grotesque coupling doesn't even feel like a stretch. Robbins tosses off nasty satiric riffs at a reckless, headlong pace, and the movie, even at its most chilling, is hilarious; its humor is both precise enough to deflate its targets and goofy enough to feel liberating. And his performance as smiling Bob, although it's conceived as a caricature, is never tiresome: it's too finely detailed, and too gleeful. This terrifically entertaining movie represents something very unlikely and very welcome: liberal humor with sharp teeth. Also with Gore Vidal, Alan Rickman, Giancarlo Esposito, Brian Murray, and Ray Wise. The songs are by Tim Robbins and his brother, David.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/7/92.) (19th Street East 6, Sutton, Quad Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

A Brief History of Time—Errol Morris's inspirational documentary essay about the physicist Stephen Hawking is a cross between a puff piece and a gee-whiz science special. The movie is even more abstract than it has to be, and it's remarkably soft-edged. In the biographical sections, Morris sketches Hawking as a wayward boy wonder who focusses his talents only after he's stricken with Lou Gehrig's disease. As far as characterization goes, that's it. There's some curiosity but no depth in the director's depiction of eccentric British intellectuals; he treats his interviewees as if he were pinning them to specimen boards, except that he doesn't name or identify them. Morris presents Hawking's ironic contrasts between human mortality and the life span of the universe with such hushed awe that he robs them of their delectability. (The familiar ripple of Philip Glass's music doesn't help.) By the end, the film disappears into its own cranium.—M.S. (9/7/92) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Candyman—An intrepid female graduate student ventures into Chicago's inner city, camera in hand, and falls prey to a bogeyman who carves up disbelievers with a hook. The academic is that mischievous-eyed blonde Virginia Madsen, and the Candyman (Tony Todd) is black; the racial brinkmanship is the film's most original and effective gimmick. Madsen gives a juicy B-picture performance, throwing herself into each absurd display of hubris, but the movie is just a gory campfire tale. To generate any genuine fun, it needs to be seen in a city, at midnight. The writer-director, Bernard Rose, adapted Clive Barker's short story, "The Forbidden."—M.S. (10/19/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Enchanted April—Adapted by Peter Barnes from Elizabeth von Arnim's 1922 novel, this period romance has a healthy sprinkling of bewitchments. The lead characters are two proper middle-class English ladies, played by Josie Lawrence and Miranda Richardson, who, partly to get away from their husbands, pool their resources to rent an Italian villa named San Salvatore for a month. They ultimately share expenses with an austere, cultured widow (Joan Plowright) and a gorgeous, bored aristocrat (Polly Walker). Italy awakens the women's sensuality and imagination, and gives them perspective; Lawrence and Richardson end up jolting their deadhead husbands (played by Alfred Molina and Jim Broadbent) back to life. The director, Mike Newell, handles the performers deftly and sympathetically, from the wonderfully ebullient Lawrence and the ravishing Walker to the robustly comical Plowright; Michael Kitchen contributes a tour de force of eccentric charm as the villa's owner. If the film, with its brittle, satiric London scenes and its expansive Italian ones, breaks too distinctly into pieces, the magic of the sunnier locations seals the cracks.—M.S. (8/10/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

1492: Conquest of Paradise—Ridley Scott's dead-in-the-water attempt to update and preserve the Columbus myth in the person of Gérard Depardieu. A virtuoso of the ersatz, Scott overdoses on fancy lighting and atmospheric fog and smoke effects, and overrelies on his composer, Vangelis, who whips up aural hurricanes. The movie is one huge objet d'non-art. The screenwriter, Roselyne Bosch, was formerly a reporter, and this script—her first—operates like checklist journalism as it steers a middle course between hero-worship and revisionism. With Sigourney Weaver (as Isabella), Armand Assante, Angela Molina, Fernando Rey, Michael Wincott, Tcheky Karyo, and Steven Waddington, the film combines American, British, Spanish, and French actors without adjusting for their jarring styles and accents. Depardieu has so little authority in English that when he rallies his sailors, you'd understand if they jumped overboard.—M.S. (10/19/92) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Glengarry Glen Ross—David Mamet's 1984 Pulitzer Prize-winner—about real-estate salesmen who put the screws on hapless marks in order to keep their own ugly jobs—made ripping theatre, whatever else it was or wasn't. But the movie, set in the lean Bush years, spells out the characters' despair in cue cards, right from the start, and hammers away at the plot so relentlessly that you can feel the nails entering the back of your skull. Still, the performers provide relief. Ed Harris and Alan Arkin, as the sleek yet panicky Moss and the sad-sack Aaronow, turn their "Are we speaking or are we talking?" duet into an existential Abbott-and-Costello number. Al Pacino, as Roma, Mamet's Mr. Slick, is amusingly lordly: he's simultaneously high-handed and underhanded. And Kevin Spacey, as their steely office manager, Williamson, plants a daringly long fuse and ignites it with the smallest flicker. Only Jack Lemmon, as Shelley (the Machine) Levene, disappoints: he starts strong, but the director, James Foley, lets him drown in unearned emotion, as if this were Lemmon's shot at "Death of a Salesman." Mamet did his own adaptation, adding another ruthless person to the melodrama: a head-office hit man played by Alec Baldwin.—M.S. (10/5/92) (Village Theatre VII, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through Oct. 22.)

Hero—Stephen Frears' new movie often feels like a remake of something from the thirties or forties. Its plot premise—an ordinary man is lionized by the media for a courageous act he didn't perform, and the actual hero can't get anyone to see the truth—provides the sort of material that Preston Sturges and Frank Capra liked to work with. And the script, an original by David Webb Peoples (who also wrote "Unforgiven"), even borrows from John Ford: in a sense, this picture is a screwball-comedy take on "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance." The movie is fascinating to watch, but most of the time you're sitting there wondering why this ingeniously constructed script isn't playing better. Simply stated, Peoples hasn't written many funny lines, and Frears' attempts to create comic business visually feel strained and unspontaneous. The filmmakers fail to supply the incidental pleasures and the joyous sense of immediacy that screwball farce—even ironic, subversive screwball farce—can't do without. Dustin Hoffman, who plays the real hero, doesn't get any kind of rhythm going until the movie is almost over; and Andy Garcia, as the faker, can't quite rise above his cryptically written role. But Geena Davis, as a hot-shot TV reporter, is smashing: she strikes a lovely balance between warmth and satiric precision, and holds it in the midst of the general chaos. Also with Joan Cusack, Kevin J. O'Connor, Stephen Tobolowsky, Tom Arnold, and (unbilled) Chevy Chase.—T.R. (10/5/92) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

The Honeymoon Killers (1970)—Based on the lives of the multiple murderers Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez, who met their victims through Lonely Hearts clubs, and who were put to death at Sing Sing in 1951. This low-budget black-and-white movie is so literal-minded that it resembles a *True Detective* account of the case; it's as if someone re-created the Grade-Z pictures of the forties and did so in absolute seriousness. The movie goes through the chronicle of the Beck-Fernandez crimes with pedestrian relentlessness; it's paced as if the actors were walking in lockstep. After the almost incredible lack of depth of the first half-hour, the film begins to acquire a fascination because of its total superficiality—it becomes something resembling Minimal art. The writer-director, Leonard Kastle, whose first picture this was, keeps the images so brightly lighted and so exactly planned and worked out that every ugly detail is in place—the hammer blow on the head, the trickle of blood, the ludicrous tongues sticking out of dead faces. As the 200-pound Martha Beck, Shirley Stoler is much too shrill at the start but quiets down and improves as the movie plods on; as the sleazy charmer Ray Fernandez, Tony Lo Bianco is alarmingly authentic to the pulpy genre. The women victims include Marilyn Chris, Barbara Cason, and Mary Jane Higby. Produced by Warren Steibel; the film uses music by Gustav Mahler.—P.K. (Film Forum 2.)

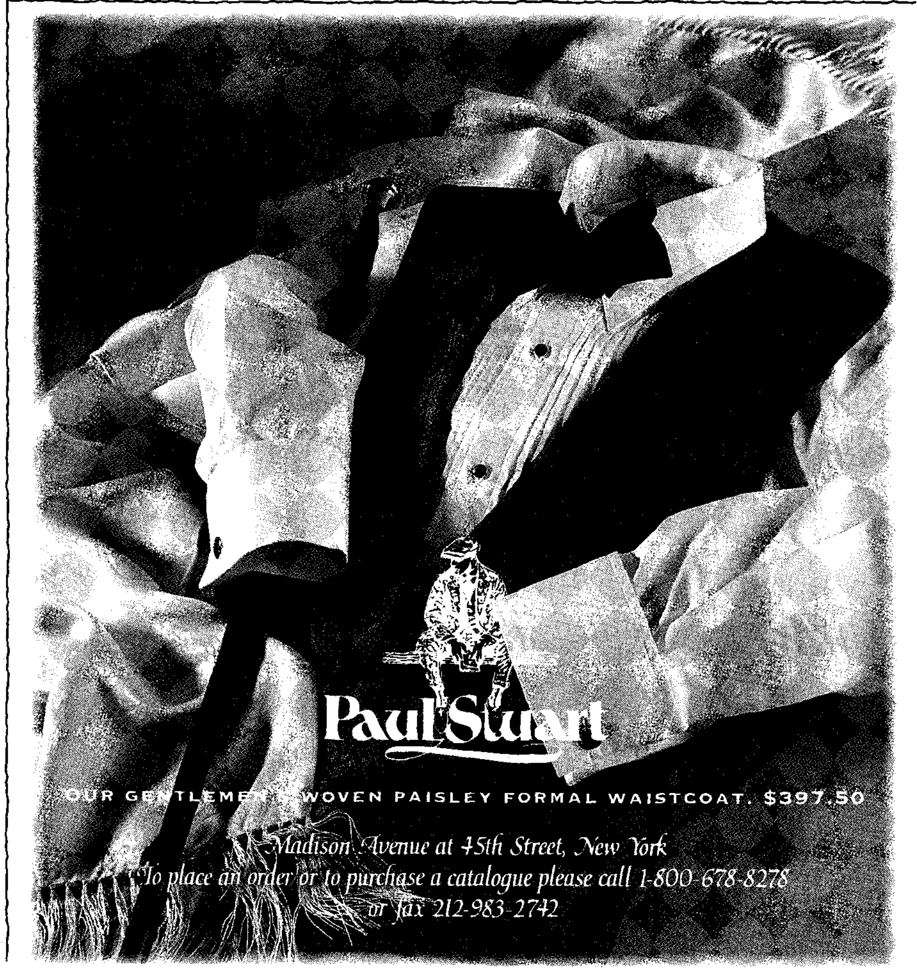
How Green Was My Valley (1941)—John Ford's much-honored movie about the decline of a Welsh mining family is moving and impressive in a big-Hollywood-picture way. Roddy McDowall and Walter Pidgeon are the leads, and the cast includes Maureen O'Hara, Sara Allgood, Barry Fitzgerald, and many other Irish actors (though the singers are really Welsh).—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 23 and 25.)

Husbands and Wives—Woody Allen's uncomfortably personal new movie renders the dissolution of a marriage in a style that's meant to look raw, rough-edged, truthful. He uses jump-cutting and wobbly hand-held camerawork to create the illusion of immediacy, of lifelike spontaneity and muddle. But the movie's vision of life isn't really very persuasive, and Allen isn't saying anything that he hasn't said before. The only thing that has changed since his late-seventies explorations of romantic futility (such as "Annie Hall" and "Manhattan") is the tone, which is now sour, dispirited, almost vindictive. The cinéma-vérité surface feels like a con, a razzle-dazzle cover for imaginative exhaustion. Both the style and the substance of this picture have a curdled quality, the air of things that have gone bad but haven't been thrown away. Except for Judy Davis's ebullient performance as a friend of the central couple, Gabe and Judy Roth (Allen and Mia Farrow), the movie's humor is surprisingly flat. Allen's gags and situations no longer betray even a trace of delight at the absurdities of human behavior: his bemused vision of romantic folly has turned, over the years, into a bilious take-my-wife-please routine. It's tempting to think of this bleakly nihilistic film as an expression of its creator's weariness with his own ideas. The most disturbing, and angering, thing about the picture is that Allen has transformed his disappointment in himself into disgust for other people: he's going down, and he's determined to take the rest of us with him. Also with Liam Neeson, Juliette Lewis, Sydney Pollack, Lysette Anthony, and Benno Schmidt.—T.R. (9/21/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Beekman, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

In the Soup—With Seymour Cassel, Steve Buscemi, Jennifer Beals, Will Patton, Stanley Tucci, and Pat Moya; directed by Alexandre Rockwell. (See illustration on page 24.) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema II; starting Oct. 23.)

The Last of the Mohicans—In Michael Mann's version of James Fenimore Cooper's improbably durable tall tale, everybody looks great: the movie seduces us with haircuts and landscape. The hero of this melodramatic story of pre-Revolutionary America is Hawkeye (Daniel Day-Lewis), a rugged but sensitive individualist who roams the forest of the Hudson Valley in the company of two Indians, Chingachgook (Russell Means) and Uncas (Eric Schweig). The three men serve as guides and bodyguards for Cora and Alice Munro (Madeleine Stowe and Jodhi May), the maidenly daughters of a British officer. The Brits are at war with the French, but the greatest danger to Anglo-Saxon life and limb is posed by a band of bloodthirsty Indian guerrillas, led by a wily Huron named Magua (Wes Studi). The setup pretty much guarantees thrills, and Mann delivers the action-movie goods, but with a sort of abstract, lyrical pictorialism. Day-Lewis's Hawkeye—a cultured white man's dream of virile primitivism—is almost entirely a visual phenomenon, and it works. (He runs well, and sports a terrific mane of straight, stringy alternative-rocker hair.) The picture is awfully, solemnly silly, but it's enjoyable and even rather stirring. Mann has polished up a not very profound myth with skill and conviction, and given it a fetching new look; that's what Pop filmmakers do. Also with Maurice Roëves and Steven Waddington. The lush cinematography is by Dante Spinotti.—T.R. (10/5/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

Mr. Saturday Night—Having your joke and eating it, too—that's what Billy Crystal man-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ages to pull off, repeatedly, in this sprawling, laughing-through-tears extravaganza (his directorial début). As Buddy Young, Jr., whom he created ten years ago and developed on "Saturday Night Live" and HBO specials, Crystal pays homage to the Borscht Belt masters of disrespect who brought their tumultuous brand of vulgar, irreverent clowning into the American mainstream during the Golden Age of Television. The Buddy of this movie is sharper and funnier than his previous incarnations: at times, he's a showcase for Crystal's own crack wit and inventiveness. Crystal and his co-writers (Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel) aim to get behind the ironic mask of this Yiddish harlequin and reveal the fierce ambition and bitterness that fuel his put-downs. Crystal is fairly tough about Buddy's self-destructive drive and his parasitic relationship with his brother and right-hand man, Stan (David Paymer). But he also wants to honor Jewish roots, building to a family-reconciliation finish. What saves the film from terminal mawkishness is the chemistry between Crystal and that remarkable actor, Paymer. Crystal's Buddy is always pitching, sometimes wildly. Paymer's Stan is always catching, and, in a subtle, self-abnegating way, calling the shots. With Julie Warner, Mary Maya, Helen Hunt, and Ron Silver.—M.S. (10/5/92) (Bay Cinema, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Quad Cinema, Ziegfeld, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Night and the City—A remake, directed by Irwin Winkler and written by Richard Price, of Jules Dassin's terrific 1950 film noir. The filmmakers and their star, Robert De Niro, try to tap the Scorsese vein of kinetic urban violence, out-of-control male energy, and brooding, pessimistic wit. Everyone involved in the picture has a formidable resume, but what they've put on the screen is wan, washed-out, blurry—a photocopy of a fax of a carbon of something that was once clear and bold. As in the original film, the story is about a small-time hustler who foolishly invades the turf of a powerful sports promoter and is decisively slapped down for his efforts. Price and Winkler make only the most glancing attempt to re-create the tone of Dassin's movie; they turn the story into a comedy about a lovable loser, a New York motor-mouth who is supposed to charm us with his indefatigable optimism. Winkler moves the camera constantly, fills the soundtrack with old rock and roll and R. & B., and tries hard to create a gritty atmosphere of low-life New York desperation, but everything he does looks mechanical, as if it had been learned by rote. Price's deft verbal riffing is just decorative. And De Niro's performance, in a role that Richard Widmark played brilliantly in the 1950 version, produces a perfect vacuum at the center of the picture. De Niro isn't charming and he isn't funny; he's like a hologram of himself, recognizable but eerily insubstantial. Also with Jessica Lange, Cliff Gorman, Alan King, Jack Warden, and Eli Wallach.—T.R. (10/19/92) (Coronet.)

Of Mice and Men—The director and co-star, Gary Sinise, has been quoted as saying, "I saw the 1939 film version and it was such a product of its time that it meant nothing to me. I thought Lon Chaney, Jr., was real hammy." Actually, Lewis Milestone's version of John Steinbeck's tragic fable, with Burgess Meredith as the shrewd ranch hand George and Chaney as the simple giant Lennie, is a wonderfully wrought classic. This new movie, adapted by Horton Foote—with Sinise as George and John Malkovich as Lennie—is the one that goes high on the hog. Led by Sinise, who edges his profile into every shot as if he were a model in a rustic-clothing catalogue, and Malkovich, who carries on like a further infantilized Tommy Smothers (his upper register recalls Tweety Pie), the cast acts with self-conscious, surface physicality. Ray Walston fits right in with the histrionics on this film's Steppenwolf Ranch; even Joe Morton catches the overacting bug. At least Casey Siemaszko is down-to-earth as the bully, Curley, but for all the talk of humanizing his flirty wife, Sinise hangs Sherilyn Fenn out to dry. The only restrained performance is given by Lennie's pup.—M.S. (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

The Public Eye—Inspired by the tabloid-news photographer Weegee, this oddball reverie, set in New York circa 1942, is gorgeous and disappointing. It gets rolling early, then stops cold. When Barbara Hershey, the widow of a fancy-nightclub owner, gets Joe Pesci, a notorious, artistic shutterbug, to investigate a mystery man, the audience is eager to see his hardscrabble vision of life put to use in detective work. But the writer-director, Howard Franklin, comes up with a suspense plot that bogs down in details. While just about all the actors make good impressions—including Pesci, who imbues the hero with acute street reflexes and surprising sensitivity—only Stanley Tucci, as a low-level mobster, and Jerry Adler, as a self-loathing columnist turned playwright, tap any subterranean emotions. What sustains the movie is Franklin's loving, complex evocation of the period; the real world and the photo world bleed into each other, sometimes literally. Peter Suschitzky did the sumptuous, dark-toned cinematography.—M.S. (10/19/92) (34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Shirley Stoler in
"The Honeymoon Killers"

Rancho Notorious (1952)—Not one of the films that Fritz Lang will be remembered for. Lang said that this Western was conceived for Marlene Dietrich (she plays an aging femme fatale, a retired dance-hall hostess who operates a hideout for outlaw gangs) but that by the time is was finished he and Dietrich had stopped speaking to each other. Financed by Howard Hughes, though on a small scale, it was shot mostly in the studio; the picture was to be called "Chuck-a-Luck" and Lang used the ballad "The Legend of Chuck-a-Luck" as an integral theme song, but afterward Hughes changed the title. (The picture was also recut.) Possibly even under the best of circumstances the mixture of Lang's conspiratorial motifs with the Western characters and locale might not have worked out. Arthur Kennedy is a cowpuncher obsessed with getting revenge for the rape and murder of his fiancée, and Mel Ferrer is Frenchy, a Western variant of Lang's master criminals. With Gloria Henry, William Frawley, Jack Elam, Dan Seymour, George Reeves, Lloyd Gough, and Fuzzy Knight.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 26-27.)

Reservoir Dogs—Most of the action in Quentin Tarantino's pulp crime movie takes place in a cavernous warehouse, to which the surviving participants of a botched jewelry heist have repaired to lick their wounds. The crooks amuse themselves by accusing each other of treachery (*someone* tipped off the police), waving their guns, screaming obscenities, and torturing a cop whom one of them has captured. This is, explicitly, a man's world. (There isn't a woman with a speaking part in the movie.) Tarantino emphasizes the characters' absurdity; they're all presented as demented children, little boys with big guns. He wants us to feel as if we had crack-landed in an alternate universe: the Planet of the Goons. The movie runs on film-school cleverness—a homemade pharmaceutical cocktail of pop music, visual jolts, and allusions to Scorsese and Peckinpah. As supercool young directors go, Tarantino (whose first film this is) is fairly engaging: his nihilism is antic and oddly cheery. But the picture is less than the sum of its outrageous gags and inventive bits of business. The dramatic possibilities of infantile bullies goading each other to violence are sadly limited. The story is impressively bloody, but the blood is thin, and it keeps leaking out; Tarantino has all he can do to maintain the movie's pulse. The film, for all its mayhem and fury, is too distant to be truly disturbing; it treats everything with an impatient, born-too-late shrug. This is a reasonably lively picture about nothing, and that's apparently just what it was meant to be. With Harvey Keitel, Tim Roth, Steve Buscemi, Michael Madsen, Lawrence Tierney, and Chris Penn.—T.R. (10/19/92) (Village Theatre VII; starting Oct. 23.)

A River Runs Through It—Robert Redford's movie of Norman Maclean's lyrical novella about fly-fishing and family loyalty in Montana is serene, lulling, tranquil—no, it's dead dull. Maclean's story traces the history of its narrator's relationship with his self-destructive kid brother, Paul, through detailed descriptions of their fishing trips; the narrative is driven by the tension between what it's telling us and what it's leaving out. Disastrously, Redford and screenwriter Richard Friedenberg open up the story. They show us too much of what's happening offstage—that is, away from the river—and thus allow the real source of the story's emotions to dissipate. With a delicately balanced narrative like this one, more is inevitably less. (And the extra scenes cooked up by the filmmakers are banal by any standard.) The movie is ravishingly shot (by Philippe Rousselot), but it's lifeless, because it lacks the vital spirit of Maclean's writing: the precision and grace that he seems to have learned, in part, from fly-fishing. Redford and Friedenberg try to catch the story's elusive meanings by lobbing grenades into the river and blowing everything in it out into the light of day. With Craig Sheffer as the narrator, Norman, and Brad Pitt (who looks like a young Redford and gives a lightweight performance) as Paul. The supporting cast includes Emily Lloyd, Tom Sherritt, Stephen Shellen, Nicole Bu[illegible]dette, Brenda Blethyn, and Susan Traylor.—T.R. (10/19/92) (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, and Columbus Circle.)

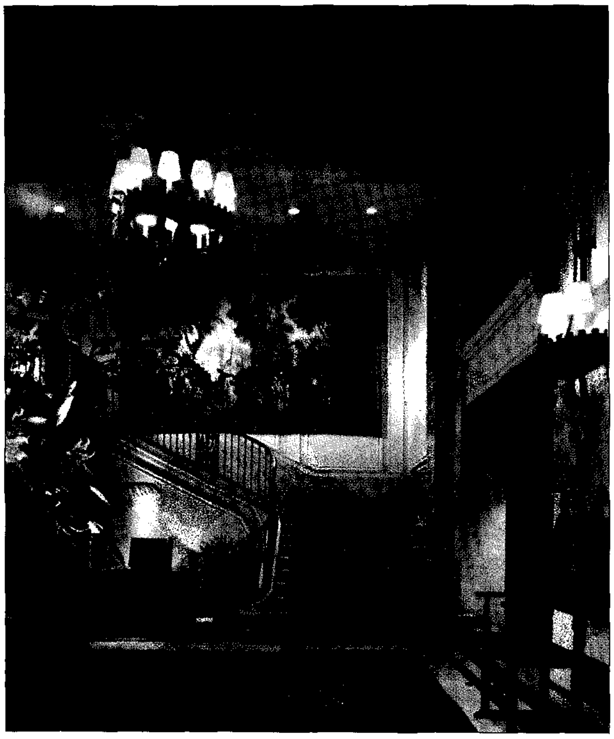
Sarafina!—It promises to adopt a daring street-cabaret approach to the Soweto children's rebellion in 1976. But after a couple of big numbers shot and cut in the ragged, grabby style of "Fame," the movie version of Mbongeni Ngema's musical drama settles into a conventional coming-of-political-age story. Inspired by an idealistic teacher (played by Whoopi Goldberg, who can't overcome the coy virtuousness of the role), the lead schoolgirl, Sarafina (Leleti Khumalo), unites her reverence for Nelson Mandela and her dreams of school-show stardom, eventually joining the mass youth demonstrations against apartheid and the official curriculum. The writers, William Nicholson and Ngema, and the director, Darrell James Roodt, take admirable positions against violence as well as oppression. But their film is caught between stylized protest and messagey melodrama. The incidents of carnage—especially a young black mob burning a loathsome black constable to death—are more numbing than revelatory. The best shot: Sarafina, dazed and exhausted after incarceration and torture, making her way past a white lawn party to visit her servant mother (Miriam Makeba).—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas, and Embassy 1; through Oct. 22. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Oct. 23.)

Singles—Cameron Crowe's second film as a writer-director (the first was the lovely 1989 teen comedy "Say Anything") is a buoyant, sweet-tempered little picture about the romantic confusions of some young Seattle apartment-dwellers. It's an ensemble piece, the sort of movie that flits from character to character like a hummingbird. Crowe's touch is so light that you may, in the end, feel a bit unsatisfied—disappointed that the movie's buzzing comic vitality starts to lose its resonance the moment you leave the theatre. This is romantic comedy of the wispiest kind, but the picture is generous, graceful, and consistently funny. The director, in his airy way, has really created a world here: he turns the urban Northwest into a Forest of Arden for young professionals and hopeful grunge-rockers. Campbell Scott and Kyra Sedgwick play Steve and Linda, idealistic yuppies in love, and both prove to be wonderfully deft comedians. And Matt Dillon, as Cliff, the rather dim leader of a band called Citizen Dick, is hilarious. But the standout in Crowe's energetic cast is Bridget Fonda, who plays Janet, a bubbly underachiever inexplicably smitten with Cliff. Fonda is a true original: she brings such reckless, joyous abandon to Janet's pursuit of the unlikely object of desire that she transforms this desperate-love story line into something exuberantly optimistic. This movie shows that Cameron Crowe is a rare bird, too: a sunny realist.—T.R. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Orpheum VII; through Oct. 22.)

Sneakers—The director, Phil Alden Robinson ("Field of Dreams"), attempts to fashion a liberal thriller-comedy about a group of high-tech security analysts, led by Robert Redford. Under pressure from the National Security Agency, Redford agrees to steal a device that can decode any computer program in the private and public sectors. His character is a sixties survivor (one of the first computer pranksters) who has teamed up with four other overgrown, misfit boys: Sidney Poitier as a canned C.I.A. agent, River Phoenix as an ethereal computer-age juvenile delinquent, Dan Aykroyd as an ex-con gadget freak, and David Strathairn as a blind master of sound tracing. The filmmakers haven't given them the distinctive interplay and kicky gimmicks that can make a comic-book ensemble tickle the fantasy bone. They're a liberal dream team as neutered alternative family, with Redford's love interest, Mary McDonnell, as den mother. The film's smug anti-Republican humor won't win any crossover votes. "Sneakers" exploits an audience's fear of the microchip revolution, then ends up celebrating computer sabotage in the service of progressive causes. It plays into the hands of its enemies; it says that left-wingers *are* a self-righteous élite. With Ben Kingsley, who glowers malignantly in the role of a mysterious genius. From a script by Robinson and the producing-writing duo of Lawrence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes ("WarGames").—M.S. (9/21/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Topaz (1969)—Hitchcock's fifty-first feature is a larger, slower, duller version of the spy thrillers he made in the thirties. Apparently he expects us to identify with the waxwork Cuban rightists who are spying for the U.S.; he expects us to accept the creaking late-late-show romances, and the Arrow-collar-shaving-cream-ad hero (Frederick Stafford), and all the people who look like cutouts and behave like drab, enervated versions of spies in his earlier films. Per-Axel Arosenius, Michel Piccoli, and Philippe Noiret have a few moments, and Roscoe Lee Browne perks things up briefly, but most of the other performers waste away in their roles. With John Vernon, John Forsythe, Dany Robin, Karin Dor, Claude Jade, and Michel Subor. From a Leon Uris novel, adapted by Samuel Taylor.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 28.)

Unforgiven—Set in eighteen-eighties Kansas and Wyoming, this engrossing, moody Western is the sixteenth film Clint Eastwood has directed, and by far the best. The canny script, by David Webb Peoples, revives the old story about the retired gunfighter (Eastwood) who picks up his firearms again for one last score. But there's no easy resolution, and the movie is stronger because of its loose ends: the filmmakers acknowledge that the bloody chaos of an outlaw's life can't be settled in two hours and eleven minutes. The action begins when a cowboy slashes the face of a prostitute, and her co-workers pool their money to offer a reward for the murder of him and his partner. Jaimz Woolvett is the upstart who enlists Eastwood in the bounty hunt. Morgan Freeman plays Eastwood's longtime partner, Gene Hackman a megalomaniac sheriff, Richard Harris a flamboyant English gunslinger, and Saul Rubinek a dime novelist. This is the finest set of performances ever to grace a Clint Eastwood movie, and this time Eastwood even does a good job directing Eastwood. Every bullet in this movie matters; under its leathery hide is a genuine compulsion to de-romanticize Western gunfighting.—M.S. (8/10/92) (Manhattan Twin.)



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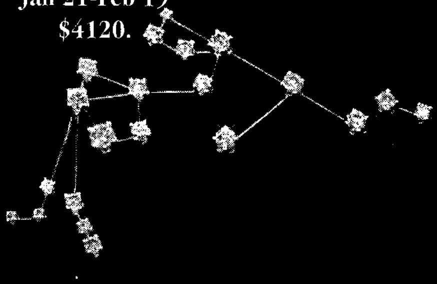
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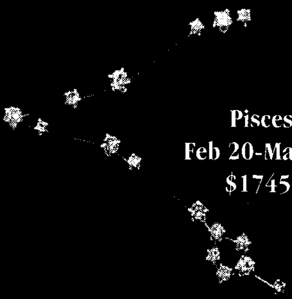
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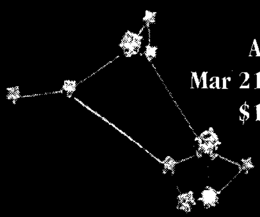
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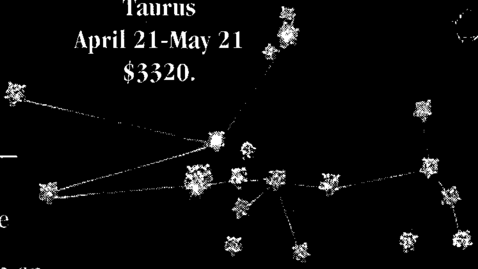
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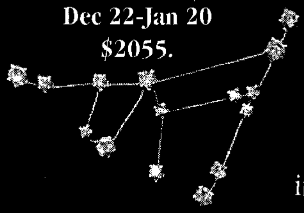
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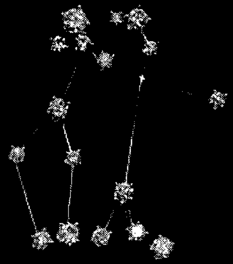
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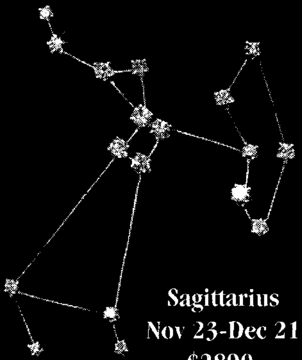
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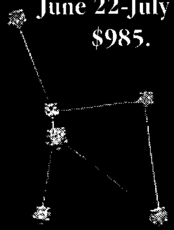
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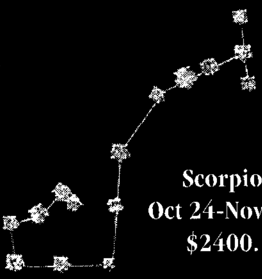
$985.


Scorpio
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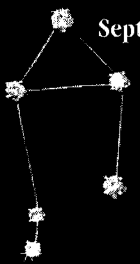
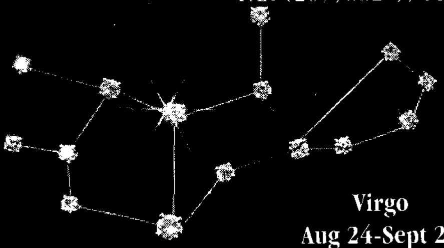
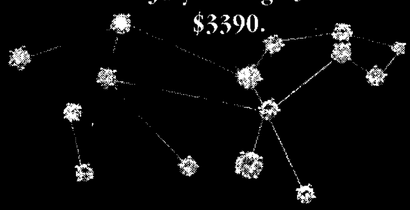

Libra
Sept 24-Oct 23
$1285.


Virgo
Aug 24-Sept 23
$3235.


Leo
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$3390.

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

FAMILY TIES

When William Haley was told that his father's estate, which included a Pulitzer Prize, notes for "Roots," and annotated proofs of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," was to be auctioned in Knoxville, he went down to Tennessee to bear witness. Though people may debate just where a writer's life ends—with his death or with his books—William is clear on Alex Haley's passing, last February. "My father's life ends in Tennessee," he says, as if reciting the plot of a familiar novel. "His life ends of heart failure, age seventy, a stone's throw from a book contract that will pull his estate from debt."

Before the auction, William examined the catalogue of his father's possessions. In the auction room, familiar objects were tagged and laid out like bodies. The sale, which netted about eight hundred thousand dollars, sent the Pulitzer award to the George Frederick Jewett Foundation and several documents to the Schomburg Center, in Harlem. The event was orchestrated by Alex Haley's younger brother, George, who had been made the estate's executor, for reasons mysterious to William. "My father's decisions offer no explanation," he says. "But he and my uncle go back to the old time, and I suppose they were close in the way of brothers whose circumstances have undergone changes." George—sixty-seven, Southern, with a deep, halting voice—says that he's of the old sensibility. What that means is that he refused to call off the auction but did allow William some time to walk the maze of his father's things. "To see all this lying there was disorienting," William says. "You would think George would let the family pick out the things we needed, but we had to bid along with everyone else. George said the estate needed cash, but does that mean everything had to go? George is family, and I'm not going to call him a bastard, but as I stood through the auction that's what I was thinking."

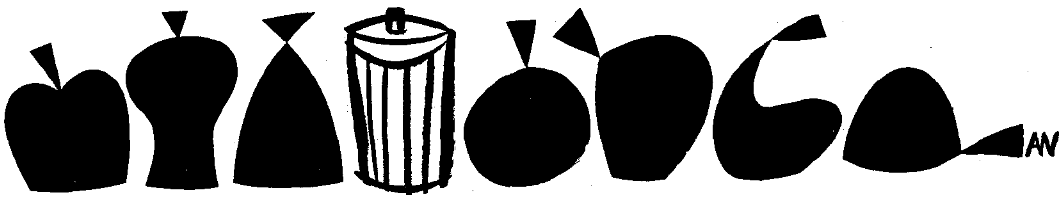
George lays the blame for the auction on his brother's penchant for large things: farms, automobiles, life style. "Alex lived in an idea world," George says. "He built unreal places, like his farm, which isn't a farm but a place people go to dream. But in this world real bills come due on imaginary places. The estate was short on assets, and we needed money to do certain things. I simply made a business decision."

The auction may have had a personal motivation as well. George lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, and works in Washington, where he chairs the United States Postal Rate Commission—a job that cannot help his popularity any—and it has been suggested that the burden of another's possessions weighed on him heavily. In one stroke, he was able to put the estate in the black, rid himself of Alex's world, and move on with his own life. "George was going to do what George was going to do," William says. "If that had meant selling off Alex Haley's legacy in the middle of the night, he would have done that."

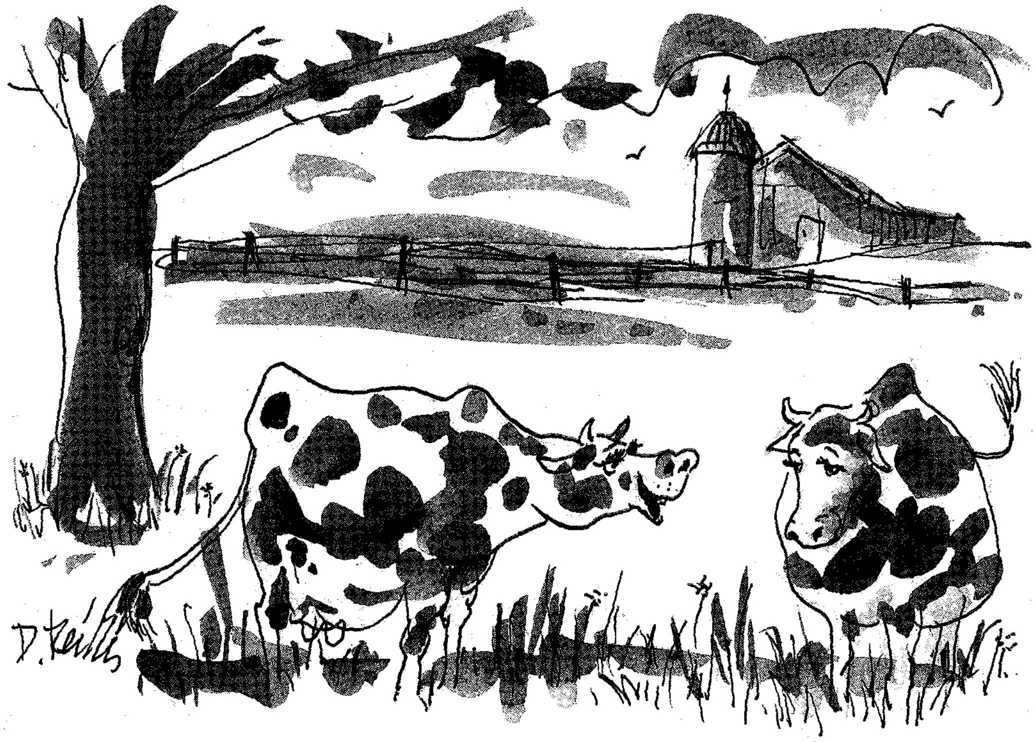
George thinks that his nephew may miss the point of his father's work. "My brother's legacy cannot be lost," he says. "It's forever available to anyone who can walk into a library." When he is pressed by reporters or family members or scholars to say how he thinks Alex would feel about all this, he says, "I don't know how, but I do know it's wrong to let the dead sit in judgment on the living. Mine was a choice of a man still in the world."

William has no doubt about how his father would react. "He would have been greatly upset, and I think George knows it," he says. "That's why he moved so quickly. I wasn't told of the auction until two days beforehand, so I couldn't do anything to stop it. Maybe George also feared his own second thoughts. I did ask those close to George to tell him that he was wrong—that he could sell off one of the unpublished books and get out of debt that way. But once he makes up his mind . . ."

Anger, George says, is a result of confusion. "I know that those who love Alex are having a tough time," he says. "But we did not sell off Alex—just some things he happened to come in contact with. People lose sight of this. When we auctioned off Chicken George's hat, everyone was so upset—everyone said we were selling the past. But the hat isn't from life, it's from the TV show 'Roots.' Lega-



ANDERS WENNGREN



"Do you love the margarine story, or what?"

cies are being confused with objects."

Those who are most upset are not family members. They are writers and scholars who had no intimate dealings with Haley. Their only memories of him are the books, the manuscripts, the notes, and the awards. "When I heard that the estate was being broken up, I was blown away," said Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the chairman of Harvard's Department of Afro-American Studies. "The black literary legacy is already so fragmented that willful fragmentation is incredibly disturbing." Gates thinks, however, that the saddest aspect of all this may also be the incident's saving grace—that the auction may be the only fitting epilogue to the life of the man who wrote "Roots." Haley spent much of his life gathering together the splintered remains of his family tradition, which is also the black tradition, and that story came back together, Gates says, in the form of his work, so now that his life is over perhaps it's appropriate that the tradition has again been scattered.

BELTWAY SUCCESSION

ONE of the problems with being Abe Rosenthal's son is that when you get a big promotion at the *Times* outsiders jump to conclusions. Things like nepotism spring to mind. Actually, the legacy of the former executive editor of the *Times* is complicated enough so that there are drawbacks as well as obvious advantages to sharing his name. But, as it happens, Andrew Rosenthal, who has just been named the paper's Washington editor, has forestalled a lot of the inevitable speculation about his father's effect on his career by distinguishing himself as a talent in his own right, first at the Associated Press and subsequently in his writing and reporting on the White House for the *Times*.

Rosenthal, who is thirty-six, will become No. 2 in the Washington bureau, as a result of major changes triggered by the planned departure of the bureau chief, Howell Raines, to become the paper's editorial-page editor after the Presidential election. R. W. Apple, Jr., the deputy Washington editor, has been named the next bureau chief, but he wants to continue writing, so Rosenthal is expected to take on a number of day-to-day managerial duties, such as assigning stories, that were formerly the province of the bureau chief. The promotions of Apple and Rosenthal are only the first in a series of expected shuffles in the bureau: Rosenthal's replacement to cover the White House will be named soon, and additional openings are anticipated, because the deputy bureau chief, Phil Taubman, is considering options that involve leaving Washington, and Maureen Dowd, the paper's star correspondent, is discussing new assignments after the election.

Apple said he chose Rosenthal as his deputy because he has reported on foreign as well as domestic politics, and because he is universally popular. In fact, it's quite difficult to find anyone with a bad word to say about Rosenthal, which is surprising, since there are a number of people quite willing to vilify his father. Although Abe Rosenthal's temperamental side is legendary, his son is unfailingly described as one of the most easygoing of men, even on deadline. "He is calm," the father volunteered of his son, but he couldn't explain how Andrew had acquired the trait, saying only, "Well—he didn't get it from me." Joseph Lelyveld, the paper's managing editor, says, "Nothing much beyond the name reminds you of his father, so the relationship doesn't leap out at you every time you see him."

According to Apple, Rosenthal is the kind of guy who, when he once saw Apple floundering for lack of good material about a visit to Washington by Mikhail Gorbachev, put on his coat and said, "I'll get back to you." Rosenthal, who was formerly A.P.'s Moscow bureau chief and speaks fluent Russian, shortly telephoned Apple to feed him crucial information. "He, of course, got no byline, and seemed embarrassed when I thanked him effusively for keeping me from looking stupid," Apple says. Rosenthal is also known for riding a scooter, on which he regularly gives his girlfriend a lift; for being a devout movie buff; and for wearing neckties considered particularly daring by Washington standards.

The youngest of three sons, and the only one to follow his father into the newspaper business, Andrew was born in India and by the age of seven had lived in Switzerland, Austria, Poland, and Japan; he settled in this country in 1963, when his father left the wandering life of a foreign correspondent to become the metropolitan editor of the *Times*. Among his early memories are discussing news stories with his father and taking annual trips to visit gregarious *Times* reporters in exotic places. "I loved their easy camaraderie," he says. "They were so into where they were, they knew amazing details about the countries where they were based. Maybe my father was secretly conditioning me."

Rosenthal never sought work at the *Times* until after his father stepped down as executive editor, in 1986, and says that, aside from some confusion in the mail room, he didn't inherit any difficulties at the newspaper, even though Abe Rosenthal still casts a long shadow there. "I've never had people come on to me in a really hostile way if they feel hostile toward him," he says. "I have had people tell me really nice things about him. I have never felt I've had to negotiate a particular minefield. He's been an important and influential and controversial figure—that's the reality—but having him as a teacher has been very important."

PRIVATE LIVES

YOU'RE famous—"significant," even—but you've always said that you don't want anyone to write your biography, and then one day you hear that someone is doing just that. What do you do? Two and a half years ago, Sir Stephen Spender heard that a young man named Hugh David had been commissioned to write his life, and he did as follows: protested to the publishers, denied David permission to quote from his work, and, David assumes, let it be known to friends how unfriendly their coöperation with any such book could be. End of life story? Not a bit. Last week saw the publication in London of David's three-hundred-page "Stephen Spender: A Portrait with Background."

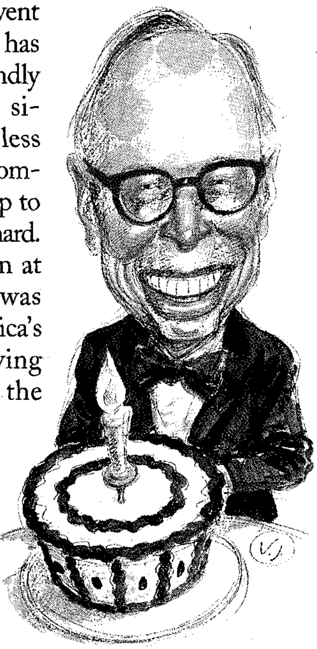
The book has caused a larger-than-life row, with commentators either treating it as a moral test case (shouldn't we have the copyright over our lives while we are still living them?) or enjoying the excuse to rake over Spender's gay and

ARTHUR! ARTHUR!

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR., celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday last week, at a party held in one of those marble-halled, oak-panelled clubs that appear to exist expressly for such occasions. Professor Schlesinger cuts an especially lively figure, and it was noted throughout the evening that in his case a mere three-quarters of a century of life was premature cause for celebration—a tempting excuse for a party, rather than an authentic reason for one. Serving as toastmaster, William vanden Heuvel made it clear that the gathering was but the first of a series of *Schlesinger-Geburtstagsfeste* that would be held at appropriate intervals through the next quarter of a century.

Nevertheless, the affair did have an official stamp—New Yorkers dare not be seen to be enjoying themselves unless they can also be seen to be doing good. The party was being given under the rubric of the newly announced Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Fund, which is to be administered jointly by the Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy Libraries, and the income from which will provide grants to young historians working in the period of American history that falls within and between the Presidencies of Roosevelt and Kennedy, grants to those studying the Soviet archives of that period, and scholarships for members of minority groups specializing in American history. During dinner, vanden Heuvel called on a number of guests to provide what the program called "reflections" pertaining to the guest of honor, most of which proved to be genteel equivalents of a Friars Club "roast." Betty Comden, Adolph Green, Kitty Carlisle Hart, and Phyllis Newman sang a parody of "Alexander's Ragtime Band" that (because Mrs. Schlesinger's first name is Alexandra) emerged as "Alexandra's Raffish Man." John Kenneth Galbraith provided a brief, droll commentary, and Professor Schlesinger rounded off the dinner with an Oscar winner's litany of thanks to family, friends, and colleagues.

Professor Schlesinger is noted for the quickness of his mind and the nattiness of his dress. (He has fearlessly championed the bow tie through its every rise and fall on the bourse of fashion.) Within the walls of his club, fellow-members describe him as the epitome of what Samuel Johnson coined the word "clubbable" to express—an inveterately congenial man, who, though capable of producing a gloss on the latest political event almost before it has happened, is kindly enough to fall silent while his less mentally agile companions catch up to him, breathing hard. Again and again at the party, he was hailed as America's preëminent living historian; at the same time, he was affectionately chided for not having completed his immense "The Age of Roosevelt," which he has been laboring on for well over thirty years.



Raffish Man

VICTOR JUHASZ

"Perhaps I had better mend my ways," Schlesinger said. "When he was eighty-five, my mother's collateral relative the great nineteenth-century American historian George Bancroft wrote to his friend Oliver Wendell Holmes the elder, 'I rise in the night, light my fire and candles, and labor with close application full thirteen hours consecutively, that is, from five in the morning until eight in the evening, with one short hour's interruption for breakfast and no other repast, not so much as a sip of water.' In my case, I would probably be thinking of sipping a nice ice-cold dry Martini."

—BRENDAN GILL

Communist past. As a controversy, the whole business has plenty of color: the eager-beaver thirty-eight-year-old researcher versus the reluctant eighty-three-year-old poet; the new-nineties no-holds-barred biographer versus the last great survivor of England's thirties; the chippy little David versus the establishment Goliath.

Both men have been given generous amounts of column space—by the London *Times*, the *Observer*, and the *Independent on Sunday*—to air their differences. David says that he was once taught by Spender, and that when he proposed a biography the poet seemed to have no objection; Spender says that he has no recollection of teaching David, and that when he finally met him he considered David quite unsuitable for the job. David says that Spender is a vigorous self-promoter who "deprivatized" himself forty years ago, when he wrote a confessional autobiography, "World Within World"; Spender says that he is still a private person trying to write poems. David wonders why it is that Spender has in the past approved of unauthorized biographies of others: didn't he enthusiastically review Peter Ackroyd's unauthorized life of T. S. Eliot, and didn't he also coöperate with a biographer of Auden, who never wanted a biography to be written? Spender would probably answer that neither Eliot nor Auden was alive to read what was said, but he is, and has found David's book full of errors of fact and interpretation, which the publishers did not allow him to correct.

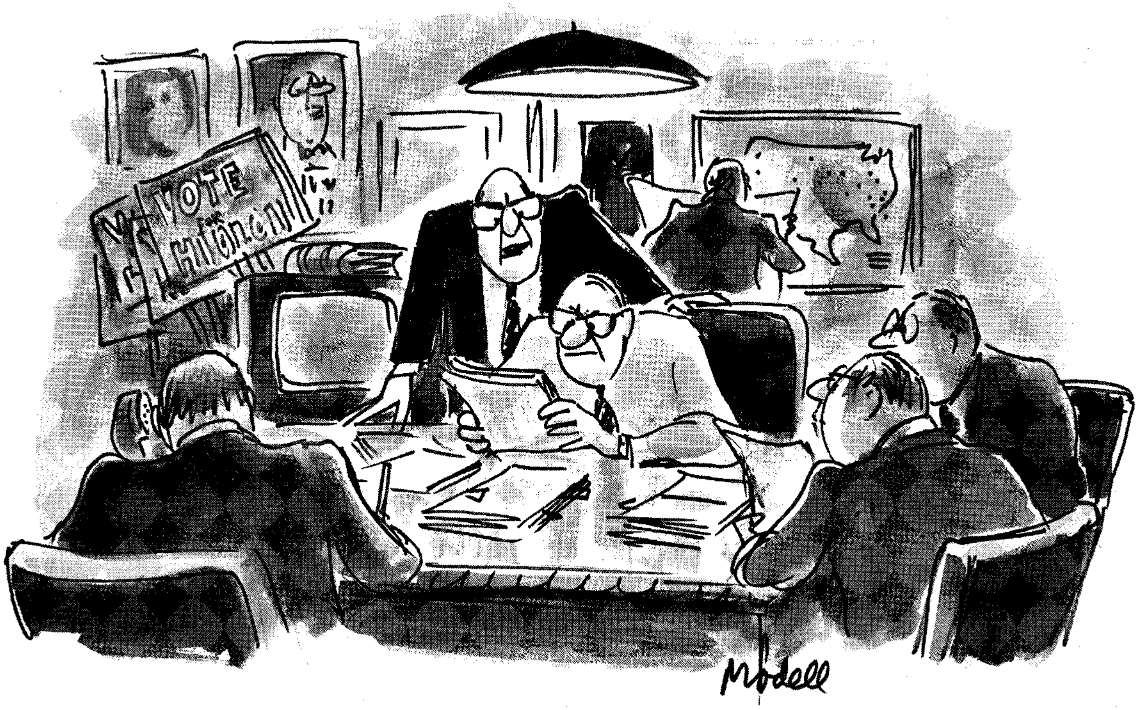
Several reviewers have already agreed with Spender that David's book is a shoddy piece of work, and point out that it is also very lazy—large parts are taken from "World Within World," with a sneering tone added. And it includes nothing about Spender's sexual past that we didn't know already. On the whole, Spender might have been better advised to let the book quietly come and go. But this would be to reckon without the formidable Lady Natasha Spender, his wife of fifty years, who when she disapproves of something seems to expect the whole of literary London to rally round. Lady Spender's view of the matter was set out last week in the *Times Literary Supplement*, in an article that, without mentioning Hugh David's book until the penultimate paragraph, fulminated against "Watergate-type investigations" into the lives of artists and writers. "In the space of two weeks," she wrote, "I have heard from four of my contemporaries of the stress they are each under (in one case amounting to serious illness) at the prospect of impending biographies." She went on to call for a new code of practice, which would end the "blackmail" and the "unconscionable" intrusiveness of unauthorized biographies.

Most people feel considerable sympathy for the Spenders—or did. The tone of Lady Spender's article, with its absurd suggestion that the subject always knows better than the biographer, is so self-righteous that opinion is now drifting the other way. The latest word from the gossip columns, of which the Spenders have always availed themselves all too liberally, is that the poet and his wife are so fed up with England that they are going to live permanently in France. And there, it turns out, Spender, whose line has always been "Over my dead body," will, after all, nominate someone to write his life.

THE PLAYERS

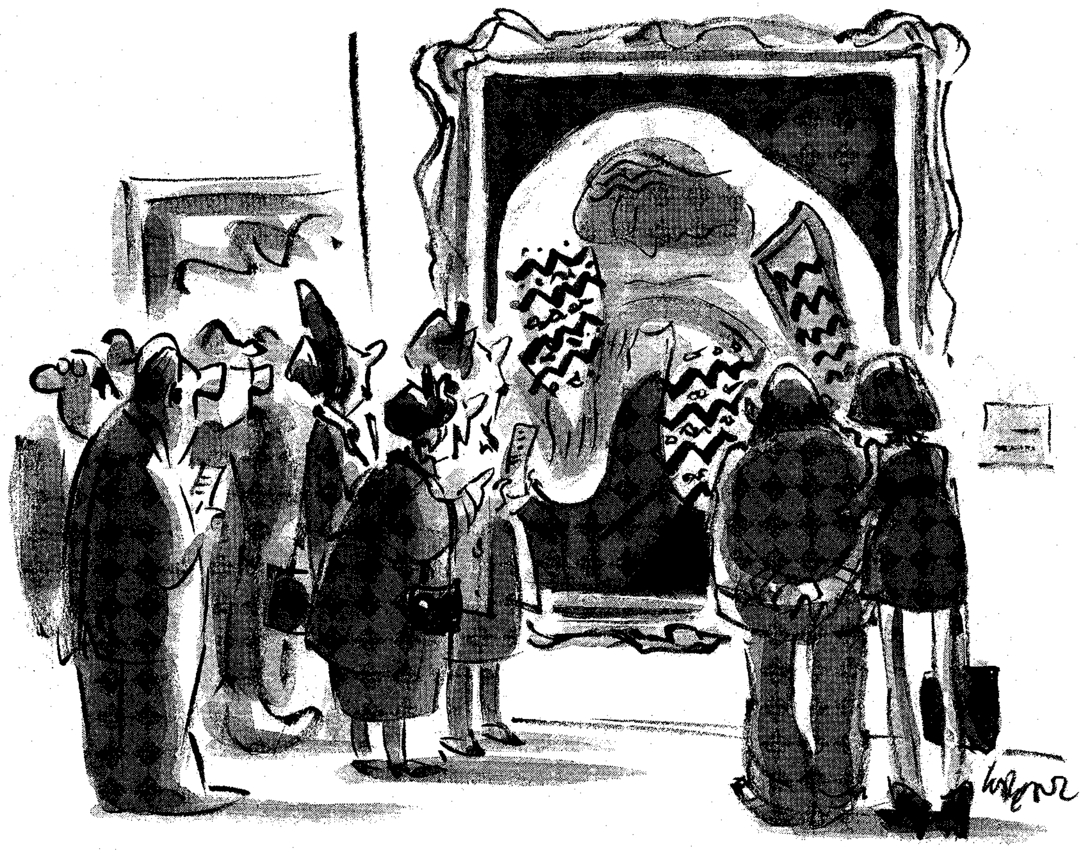
THE collapse two weeks ago of Hollywood's InterTalent Agency—a four-year-old outfit that specialized in personalized service to high-profile clients like Isabella Rossellini, Laura Dern, and Mia Farrow—has led to a sort of frantic agent free-fall. Bill Block, one of InterTalent's founders, is returning to his former agency, International Creative Management, as the head of its West Coast operations, and two of his partners, David Greenblatt and Mark Rossen, are negotiating deals to join him. Three others, Judy Hofflund, J. J. Harris, and David Schiff, are hooking up with the boutique-like United Talent Agency. And even before the ink had dried on Block's deal—it's for seven figures—industry trade papers were publishing rumors that William Morris was looking to gobble up the midsize Triad Agency. "It reminds me of the Flying Elvises," a wag I.C.M. client says of all the agents still ducking for cover.

At a time when fewer films are being made, fees are being cut, and movie sales are in a major slump, the breakup of InterTalent is further evidence of



"On the other hand, if we backpedal too much, we'll lose the hate vote."

how the recession is hitting the entertainment industry, and it suggests that the only way to compete now is with the resources of a huge agency, like I.C.M. (known for its big-name actors) or Creative Artists Agency (a movie-business cartel controlling first-rate directors), which get first crack at books and screenplays. "This indicates what agents are finding out all around—that talent doesn't care about a lack of conflict of interest. The stars don't give a shit about conflict of interest," says Joe Roth, the chairman of Twentieth Century Fox. "They're looking for the biggest gorilla that will help them hold a line against the studio. This is a scary time for everyone. And everyone wants to go with the strongest foot."



"Look! There's Dorrie's scarf!"

The InterTalent breakup stems from what one of the partners calls a "philosophical difference" within the partnership—with half wanting to maintain a smaller, specialized service to clients and the other half frustrated by the agency's inability to lure major stars. "The best way to characterize this is that it started as the whole group considering going to I.C.M.," someone close to the negotiations says. "Then the whole group decided that it wanted to stay InterTalent. Then Bill and a group decided 'Uh-uh—we want to do it and we're going to.' At which point the other half said no. So they broke up into two neat pieces."

It all crashed quickly. On Friday afternoon, the partners met and settled on an uneasy truce, agreeing to stay together while privately fielding offers from other companies. By Saturday morning, Block had begun negotiating his own deal at I.C.M. And on Sunday morning, the partners met at the Radisson Bel-Air Summit Hotel for brunch, and, knowing the end was near, one of them requested that the harpist seated nearby play "The Way We Were."

The trade papers have suggested that there was financial instability at InterTalent, and a studio head implied the same thing. "Block is a guy that wants to have a big agency, with a music division and offices all over, operating like a general to his staff," he said. "But he made all the wrong moves in the teeth of a recession and didn't understand the depth of cash needed to run a private company." Block, however, fiercely denies such allegations, calling them "character assassination" and "dish-ism." And InterTalent loyalists think that some of the criticism has been instigated by agents at C.A.A., who are still angry about Hofflund's and Greenblatt's departure from that agency four years ago.

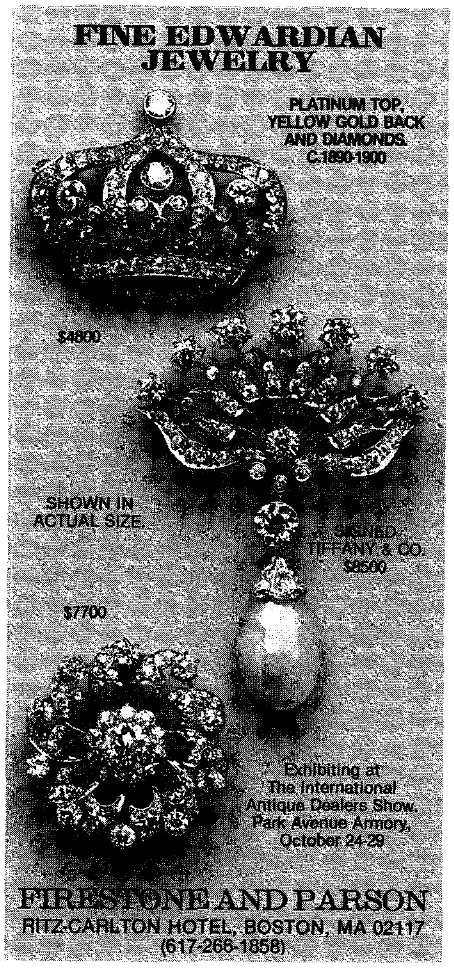
The immediate result of all the consolidation will probably be a loss of jobs. Already, I.C.M. is planning to lay off half a dozen middle-level agents, and more sackings are expected as the company is streamlined by Block. "Nobody views this with glee," says the producer Lynda Obst, an I.C.M. client. "Nobody is happy. This is the death of a bunch of hundred-thousand-dollar jobs here in town." But Greenblatt minimizes the loss. "If all goes well, all we'll lose is some people in the mail room," he says of InterTalent's dissolution. What he doesn't say is that the super agents of the world have traditionally begun their careers in the company mail room.

Not Block, though. New York born and bred, he has been a fixture on the Hollywood circuit since he arrived in town, twelve years ago, after working as a production assistant for David Susskind. "He looks vampiric—like an edgy thirties matinée idol," says one acquaintance. "He likes black leather, drives a black sportscar, and lives in this ultra-modern house, all black and white, that's as sharp and angular as he is."

"There's a superficiality about Bill that even he finds amusing," a client says. "It's a tongue-in-cheek quality that's endearing."

Another client defends Block by saying, "In a business of slimebags, I might as well have one working for me."

When Block was asked if he had any regrets about the demise of InterTalent, he said, "No." He paused, and then added, "And I'm not a sociopath." ♦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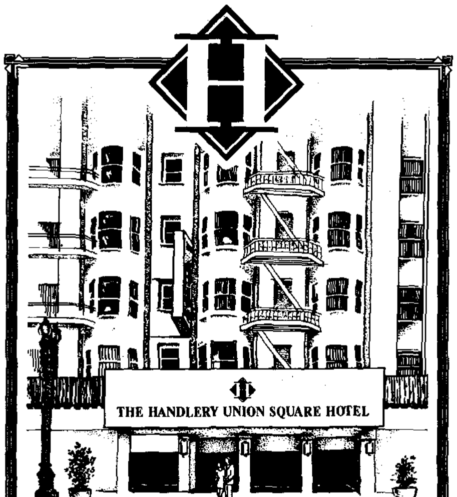
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MADONNA'S ANTICLIMAX

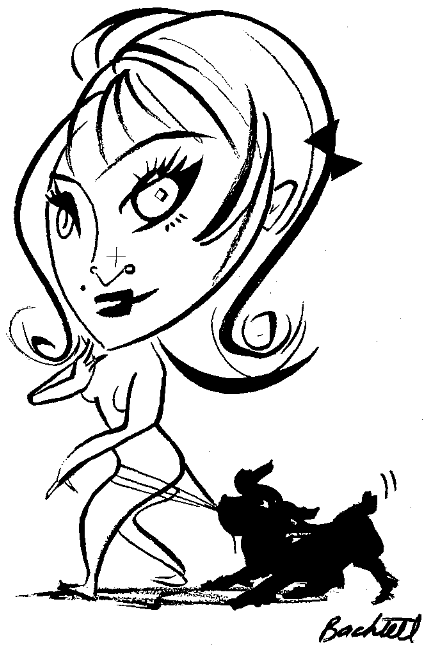
by Calvin Tomkins

THE world's first pornographic blockbuster arrives this week, to the sound of heavy breathing in all media. "Sex," Madonna's picture book of erotic fantasies, is an international event—a first printing of seven hundred and fifty thousand copies, issued in five languages, together with a bonus CD of Madonna's soon-to-be-hit single, "Erotic," and no end of public appearances by an author whose infallible rapport with the public is one of the wonders of our age. The Mafia-like *omertà* surrounding the book was finally breached on Columbus Day weekend, when thirteen hundred and sixty-five copies were filched from a truck in Waltham, Massachusetts—a coup whose timing, from a public-relations standpoint, could hardly be bettered. But the publicity campaign now reaching gale force cannot drown out some long sighs of disappointment from anyone who plunks down $49.95 for this great missed opportunity.

Of all the minor art forms, pornography has remained the least developed. Certified pornographic masterworks, from Sappho to Nabokov, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The best-known critical theorists of the form, from Anthony Comstock to Jesse Helms, have had the disadvantage of being morons. The National Endowment for the Arts supports pornographic experiment unwillingly, at best, and our popular culture contents itself with unimaginative increases in the gross annual depiction of bare skin and earnest copulation. How the heart leaped up, then, at the news that Madonna was planning to liberate us from this morass. Surely Madonna, reigning icon of American celebrity, dazzling reincarnation of the Warhol dogma that major fame can be achieved with minor talent, was marshalling her unparalleled creative and commercial resources to produce a porno book that would not only bust blocks but take us places we had never been to before.

Well, she blew it. "Sex" not only breaks no new ground; it tumbles kerplop into the pit of glumness that swallows ninety-nine per cent of the world's would-be pornographers. It is boring, non-erotic, and dumb.

Her book is divided up, more or less, into nine narrative sequences, three of which feature S & M encounters that are mostly homosexual but far from gay: Madonna tied to a chair while two female skinheads kiss her, nibble her nipples, and threaten her with a knife; Madonna in a black leather outfit cut to expose her breasts, lying back amid chains while a hefty male biker unconvincingly simulates cunnilingus; Madonna in an evening gown, surrounded by denizens of a male strip club who wear dog collars and sweat a lot. Nobody here shows any signs of enjoying the proceedings, although in one or two shots Madonna looks as if she might be suppressing the giggles.



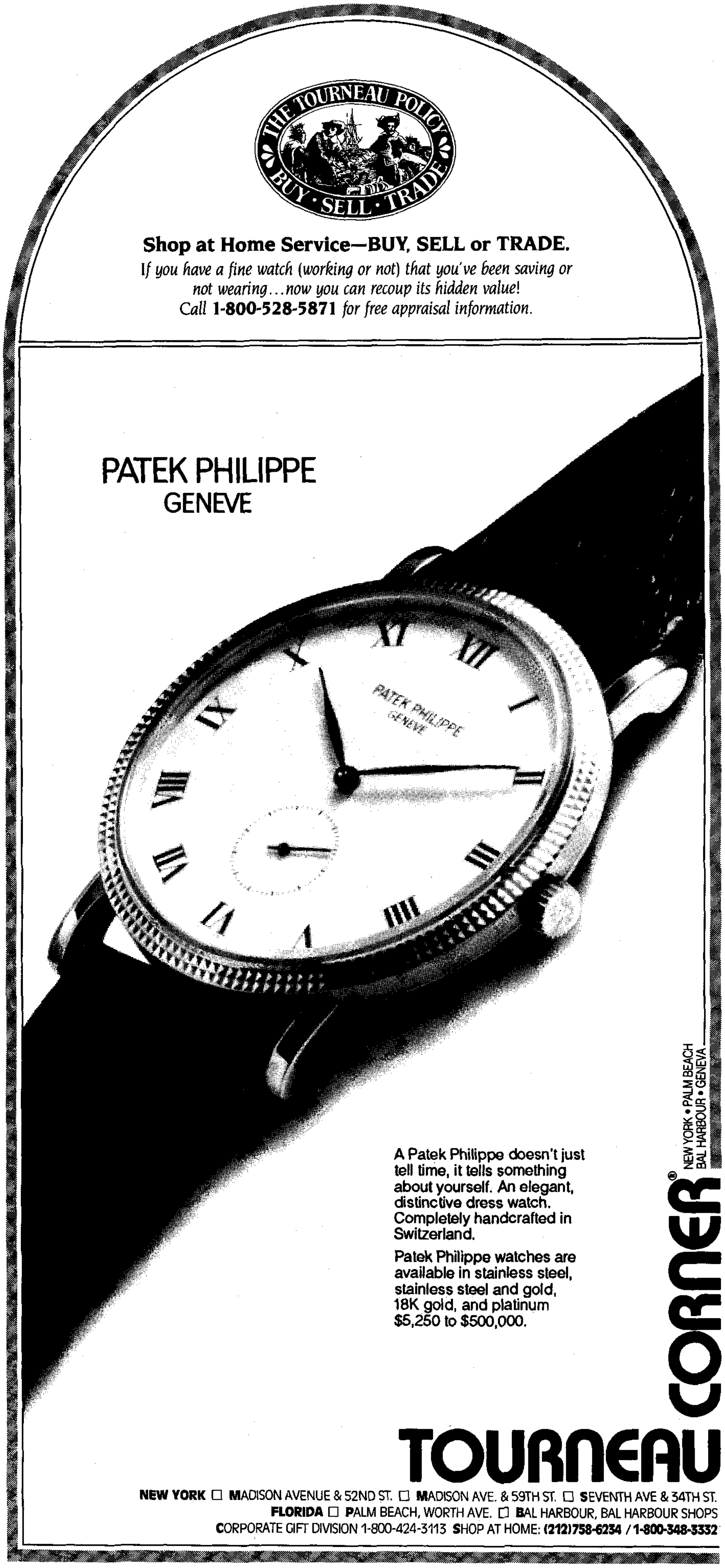
Then there is Madonna with The Older Man—not only older but seriously overweight, and *very* glum, and obviously wondering how long he has to keep his hand placed just so on the underslope of that assertive left breast. We also have Madonna applying lipstick to The Younger Man in a hotel bedroom, and Madonna skinny-dipping with Isabella Rossellini, and Madonna in a variety of intimate threesomes, interracial and otherwise: political correctness is not stinted here, although the well-muscled black man in one series gives the hilarious impression of wishing rather desperately that he could be somewhere else. As the narratives progress, and the leather and chains give way to gentler images of beach, bedroom, and a Miami street where Madonna is seen hitchhiking in high heels and nothing else, the star herself appears now and then to be having a little fun, but nobody else does, and that includes the reader.

The effort that went into all this makes the outcome seem doubly cruel. Nicholas Callaway, the distinguished art-book publisher who produced "Sex" for mass-market distribution by Warner Books, has pulled off something of a graphics marvel—a richly textured quality reminiscent of gravure-printed photographic books of the nineteen-fifties, such as Henri Cartier-Bresson's "The Decisive Moment." Fabien Baron, the art director for the project, has combined photographs and text and color and design with great verve; he has made "Sex" such an interesting exercise in graphic art, in fact, that you tend to feel that it's more about layout than about getting laid.

The written passages, which include several "letters" from Madonna's alter ego, Dita, to her lover, Johnny, are the book's only real erotica—albeit in old-fashioned, porno-cliché terms. The photographs are not only non-erotic but just plain bad. Steven Meisel, the hottest and probably the highest-paid fashion photographer on the planet, has let down the team with image after image that is dead on the page—lifeless, derivative, imaginatively limp. There is only one great shot in the whole book, and Baron has sensibly spread it across two pages; it's a closeup of a nude female torso (Madonna's, presumably), turning a backward somersault underwater so that all we see is the upper thighs and the pubic triangle. At first glance, it resembles some wondrous sea creature, like a manatee, but then you get it, and realize that it concludes a little subsection of the book called "My Pussy Has Nine Lives."

But we can't blame Meisel for the fiasco. It's Madonna's book, and Madonna, as we all know, controls the world. (Her world, at any rate.) In several prepublication interviews she has announced somewhat testily that "Sex" is supposed to be funny, not shocking, and has talked on about the book's humorous aspects, and that's a real downer, not just because the humor is as hard to find as the shocks but because Madonna ought to know that when you have to tell your audience that something is a joke it's time to get off the stage.

Sadly, her book is going to give pornography a bad name. ◆



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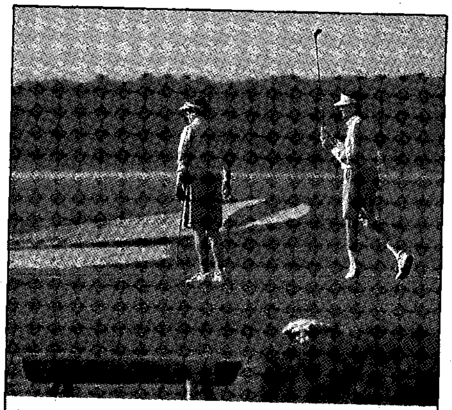

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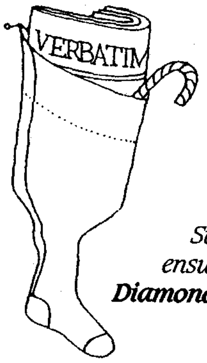

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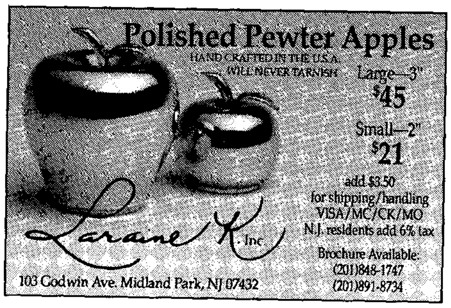

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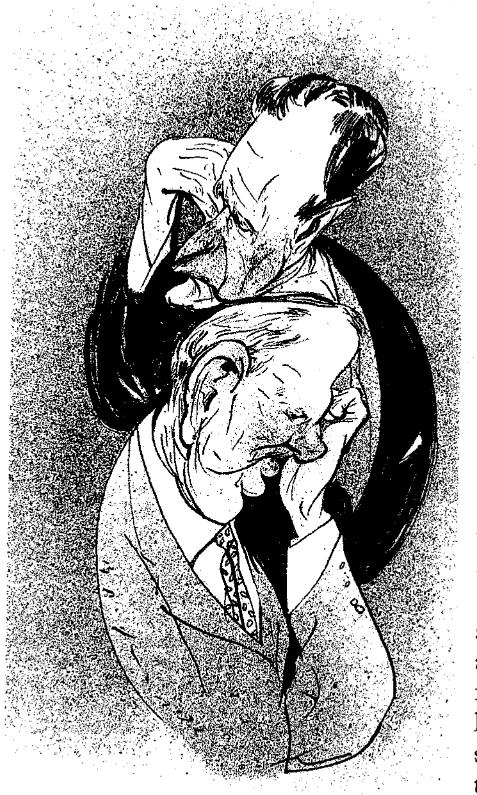
THE DIPLOMATIC ROUND

SHUNNING THE LOSERS

by John Newhouse

IF George Bush is fated to be a one-term President, he will be remembered for his utter preoccupation with foreign affairs, to the exclusion of matters other than his political fortunes. Over the past half century, American Presidents from Roosevelt through Reagan have struggled—by and large successfully—to deal with threats to the country's and the world's security while also sustaining and promoting rising standards of living. Bush, however, has virtually ignored domestic affairs, largely because of his reluctance to ruffle the hard right on the issues that matter most to it now; these include the entire social agenda as well as the sanctity of so-called Reaganomics. Also, Bush makes no secret of his lack of interest in domestic problems, having noted, when he was asked about this at a news conference, "I don't want to get stretched out on the couch too far in terms of analysis," but then conceding that foreign problems were more fun than domestic ones. He has made some ardent but unavailing attempts to lower the tax on capital gains. Otherwise, foreign policy has served not just as the outlet for his hyperkinetic style but also as the arena in which he could work alongside his great confederate and helmsman, James A. Baker.

Working with an old and intimate friend also set Bush apart from his predecessors: first, because it is rare, and, second, because Baker, the junior partner, did the larger part of the heavy lifting—although not during the Persian Gulf crisis, which the White House sees as its finest hour. Initially, the division of labor was a curious one: Bush, the President, behaved like a Secretary of State manqué, whereas Baker, a brilliant political operator, seemed to have wandered into an unnatural environment. He and Bush were not a matched pair. Bush had collected some lofty titles but had always been held on someone's short leash. Baker was known in Washington as much the brighter, tougher, and more resourceful of the two; he would give political direction.



George Bush and James Baker: Baker set Bush's course by studiously separating foreign-policy "winners" from "losers."

STEVE BRODNER

Baker did arrive at State with an agenda, intending first to neutralize his party's obsession with the Central American left. He did so, thereby meeting a precondition to good relations with Congress. And, like Bush, Baker had already spotted the glint of opportunity in Israel's heavy-handed repression of the swelling Palestinian protest on the West Bank. Baker came to State with a small entourage of people who felt that they were serving a future President—that Baker would return to the White House one day under his own power, and was meanwhile getting the necessary tickets punched. But his approach to the portfolio that he had chosen for himself under Bush disconcerted diplomats and fellow foreign ministers. He was, they soon saw, a superb negotiator, an exceptionally hard worker, and a remarkably quick study; they also noted, however, that he had little interest in or curiosity about foreign policy, and took a monochromatic view of the world. Baker's abiding interest, of course, was national politics, and to him that meant devoting his energy and his considerable diplomatic skills to two constituencies: the press and Congress, in that order. Baker manipulates and fine-tunes press coverage better than any other political figure of the modern era—better, even, than Henry Kissinger, who set a new standard for press management in his day. Kissinger was not the virtuoso performer that Baker is. What Baker lacked then, as now, was a political base of his own. He intended to run for President on his résumé—especially on what he could achieve as Secretary of State.

Stylistically, Bush and Baker reinforce each other. Both are profoundly cautious. In almost any situation, Bush is all but addicted to the status quo, and although Baker is more flexible, he has actually set Bush's course by studiously separating foreign-policy "winners" from "losers." A second, more prominent difference between the two is Bush's tendency to personalize foreign affairs—to bring policy toward a given country into line with his relationship, whether good or bad, with its leader. Otherwise, the styles of Bush and Baker in their joint conduct of foreign policy have gradually converged. One part of a Bush-Baker diplomatic convention could be described as "Rock no boats unless and until you must." Shunning problems abroad that carry political risks at home—especially with the hard right—is the other, more solemn part of that convention.

NOT long after Bush was elected, Brent Scowcroft, who was to become his national-security adviser, observed that the Administration's foreign policy would be "mainstream—unimaginative, perhaps, but mainstream." As prophecy, the comment was acute. Bush's first four months were taken up by a laborious foreign-policy review, which, according to many of those who worked on it, contributed nothing; one official characterized the outcome as "status quo plus." Still, expectations within the diplomatic community and in

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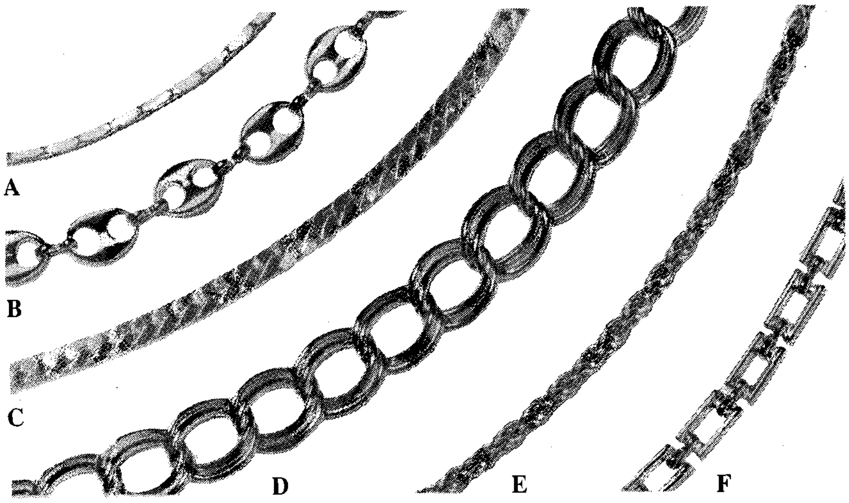

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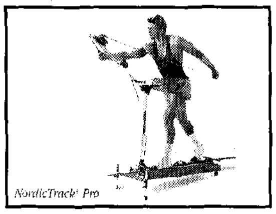

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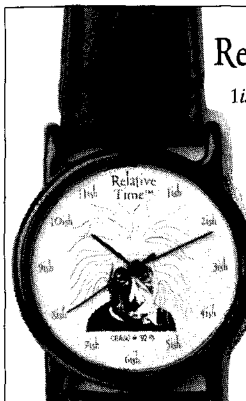
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major capitals were high. Bush's obvious *grasp of and rapt involvement with* the substance of foreign policy were gratifying, and so was the attention that he showered on fellow-leaders, in a steady flow of phone calls and handwritten notes. Although some European and numerous Japanese political figures were privately apprehensive about the declining quality of life in America, the new Administration seemed strikingly indifferent to the domestic agenda. What did trouble Bush, Baker, Scowcroft, and Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney was a small dark cloud that seemed to be hovering overhead. It was Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who was the most popular political figure in all Europe (except the Soviet Union), and had for quite a while been accepted there as an agent of useful change. In most capitals, leaders and diplomats alike urged doing as much business as possible with Gorbachev as rapidly as possible, since it was far from certain that he would survive the forces set loose by his reforms. What seemed equally self-evident to such people was the pleasing prospect of being able to work out arms-control agreements and other deals largely on one's own terms, since Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze, his deeply respected Foreign Minister, were scrambling to make deals—to promote the best possible relations with their nominal Cold War adversaries. Ronald Reagan himself had blessed this enterprise when he put his arm around Gorbachev in Red Square in June of 1988 and declared the "evil empire" a thing of the past.

Bush and his team, sensitive to the unyielding bias of their party's right wing and aware of its lack of love for him, took a sombre view. America's European allies were seen as being afflicted in varying degrees with Gorbomania. The danger, the White House believed, was that the softer line being peddled by this artful reformer would be used to split Europe from America and thereby achieve a basic Soviet goal. "Drugstore cowboy" was the early—May of 1989—White House characterization of Gorbachev, put forward by the press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater. Gorbophobia would for the moment serve as the antidote to Gorbomania.

Gorbachev was then talking notionally about a common European home, and the Bush people feared that such an idea was intended to enfold all members of the Western alliance except the North Americans. A few months later, in the autumn, Europe and the rest of the world were flung into a new era. The effects of Gorbachev's reforms at home and his soft line abroad were overwhelming his admirable but modest purposes. Half a century of experience, including the anomaly known as the Cold War, was abruptly repealed in the winter of 1989-90 as the Soviet Union released its empire and began to spin out of control. Although the implications defied instant comprehension, the sweeping change clearly harbored sweeping opportunity. Politically, the Soviet Union had become *demandeur* on all fronts. A unified German nation was now a possibility. The command economies of Eastern Europe—and conceivably of the Soviet Union, too—could now give way to market economies, managed by popularly elected governments. Arms-control agreements would be attainable largely on Washington's terms. The United Nations might even begin to play the role for which it had been designed. And the nonaligned bloc would fade away, along with the polarity that had led to its creation. In the Middle East, a peace process just might be feasible; the Soviets had already ceased being an obstructionist force there, and could now be expected to play a moderating role. Syria's scope for disruptive behavior would be narrowed, because its patron and weapons supplier, the Soviet Union, would be playing this other, cleaner game.

Baker aside, Bush and his senior foreign-policy aides had from the start impressed diplomats and other governments as experienced and capable. Even more striking were the collegiality—the absence of rancor that had agitated the four preceding Administrations—and, indeed, the apparent affability of relations between Baker, Cheney, and Scowcroft. They had all worked together in the Ford Administration, when Bush was running the Central Intelligence Agency. Cheney had been Gerald Ford's chief of staff, and Scowcroft had been, as he is now, the national-security adviser. Robert Gates, who became the director of Central Intelligence last year, was

Scowcroft's deputy during the first half of the Bush Administration, and had served in the C.I.A. in the Ford era. Baker, who was Ford's campaign manager in the 1976 election, had not then been in the foreign-policy loop, but he had been exposed no less than the others to the abiding hostility of the Republican hard right to détente with the Soviet Union.

To many diplomats, foreign and American, it seemed that Bush and his senior advisers were still listening to the drumroll of their party's hard-liners. Cheney and Gates were openly doubtful about Gorbachev and the prospect of doing serious business with him. Scowcroft seemed somewhere between agnostic and skeptical. Baker was privately taking a different view: his contacts over the spring and summer of 1989 with Shevardnadze had begun to persuade him that the Soviet leaders had put Cold War thinking behind them and were "for real," in the Administration's jargon.

Stylistically, the Administration seemed well equipped to run a reactive, purely operational foreign policy—ideal for the Cold War and other adversarial situations. Bush would be on the phone with this or that foreign leader; Scowcroft, the pluperfect senior aide, would make sure that the boss's options stayed open and the necessary paper moved smoothly. Then, there was Baker, who combined qualities that American diplomats had rarely seen in one Secretary of State: a special relationship with the President, a way with Congress, and extraordinary operational skills.

Experience has shown the Bush-Baker foreign policy to be flawed in various ways, two of which stand out. The first is Bush's personalizing of policy. "He sees himself as belonging to a freemasonry of leadership," a highly experienced American diplomat says. "He finds you attractive, he finds your country attractive." Tying friendly relations with a fellow-leader to intergovernmental relations often complicates policy and overburdens the official relationship. The two leaders may meet, or talk on the telephone, and agree on something, but at a perilous level of generality. Down the line, bureaucracies can, and often do, put different spins on whatever it was that their leaders thought they were doing. Bush also personalizes bad situations; examples include Manuel Noriega and Saddam Hussein. The practice can, and usually does, create confusion within the government about the policy itself.

The second, and more notable, flaw is the Administration's style. Within the State Department and the foreign-policy community, there is wide agreement that the absence of what Bush has called "the vision thing" hurts badly in this transitional period. Although Baker is no more a conceptualizer of policy than Bush, he was once reputed to understand the need for a strategic vision to which policy could be affixed or adjusted. "He knows you need it, and he will always have someone to supply it," a former colleague of his once told me. Baker's entourage when he arrived at State included Margaret Tutwiler, his political alter ego, whom he made the department's spokesperson. The chief policy aides were Robert B. Zoellick and Dennis B. Ross, who are generally seen as very capable. Under Baker's direction, Ross has managed a number of operations, including the Middle East peace talks. But Zoellick, who came from the Treasury Department with Baker, was the key figure; many diplomats referred to him as Super Exec, as chief trouble-shooter, and as chief conceptualizer. It wasn't long before some senior American diplomats concluded that Baker just might be running the best seventh floor that they had ever seen—operationally. Zoellick and Ross, both of whom have gone to the White House with Baker (so has Tutwiler) to work on the campaign, may have been gifted conceptualizers, but they had little time for conceptualizing; they were too busy helping Baker react to events and carry on policy to be able to think for long at one sitting about concept and strategy.

Because Baker insisted on operating strictly within this tiny circle of tested loyalists, he overburdened them; the rest of State was excluded from the principal action. As a management technique, Baker's was very effective if the purpose was to control access to sensitive information and prevent leaks—at least those of which one disapproved. Otherwise, the Baker management style was ultimately bad for policy and very bad for institutions. The people at State who normally implement policy and move it along are the assistant secretaries, on the

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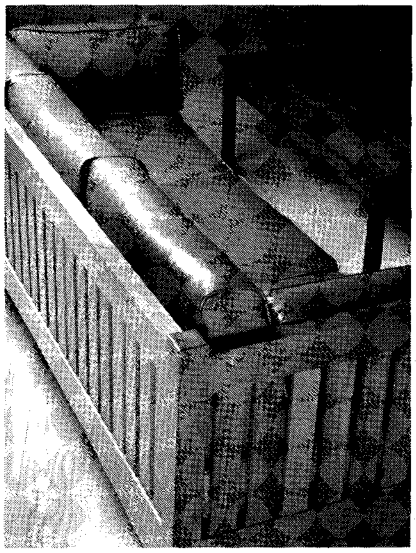

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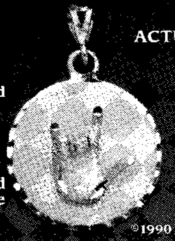

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sixth floor. Baker never found a way to use them, and they never had reliable access to him or to the information that bore most heavily on their responsibilities. Separating people on the sixth floor from their leaders on the seventh increases an Administration's risk of being blindsided by events. The attempted coup against Noriega, in late 1989, which produced a fiasco in Washington, was an example of that.

BUSH'S habit of personalizing policy was strongly displayed in Europe—first with Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl and then with Gorbachev. In the winter of 1989-90, Bush did a volte-face toward Gorbachev, becoming, in fact, the world's most prominent Gorbophile. He and Baker neither caused nor shaped the events that seemingly overnight turned Cold War into warm peace. But their tactical response to them could not have been improved on: the Administration was cautious when it had to be, resisting any temptation to exploit the events. This caution was balanced with operational flair and imagination, especially with regard to German unification. Not even Kohl and his quick-witted Foreign Minister, Hans Dietrich Genscher, who made most of Bonn's foreign policy and was strongly tugged toward East Germany, were thinking along those lines. When they did, Bush and Baker encouraged them. But Kohl didn't consult Bush and Baker or anyone else when, on November 28, 1989, he proposed the creation of "confederative structures between the two states in Germany in order to create a federation." Read now, the speech looks tame; even then, Kohl did not expect to see a fully unified German nation for several years. But, whatever it was that he had in mind, Bush and Baker supported it. In many ways, Germany was already the strongest European power, and it was judged by the Administration to be America's most important ally. As Bush and Baker saw matters, a unified Germany would be a source of stability during a period of change, provided that the enlarged nation continued to be a member of NATO. And Bush and Baker were instrumental not just in interceding with Gorbachev on behalf of unification but also in maneuvering his acceptance of an enlarged Germany as part of NATO.

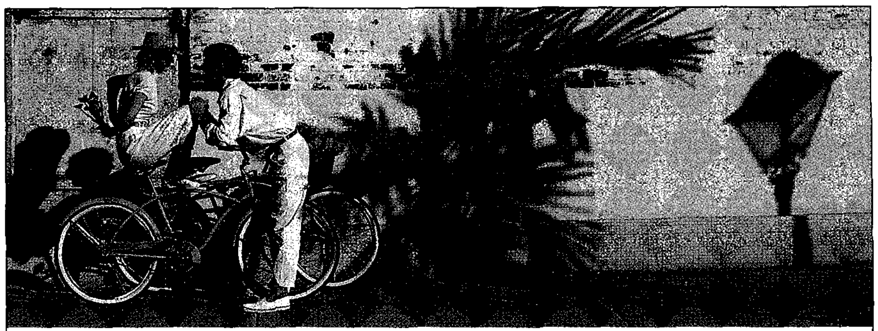
Along with the good news that accompanied the rout of Communism, there were signs that history as people once knew it was emerging from the time warp of the Cold War. The world's affairs would no longer be dominated by an adversarial relationship between two superpowers. The main arena in which to compete appeared now to involve trade and finance. There the major players, besides the United States, would be Japan, the new Germany, and possibly, by the end of the century, a united European Community. America could no longer take for granted its preëminent role in Europe's affairs. Diplomacy could no longer be practiced by Cold War rules—the ones that Washington knew best.

Some American diplomats began to worry about relations with major allied capitals—Bonn, London, and Paris. Bush, they noted, had ignored one of diplomacy's first principles by binding his foreign policy to individuals—in this case, to Kohl and Gorbachev—and now one of those individuals, Gorbachev, was in a steep political decline. Bush and Baker had done a lot to make possible a united Germany without asking for, let alone getting, something from Kohl and Genscher in return; this, too, seemed odd to diplomats. They felt that Washington would have to obtain help from Bonn in establishing some new and workable link between NATO and the E.C. Also required, diplomats felt, was some buttressing of American relations with London and Paris: Britain saw an enlarged Germany as a potentially dominant force, and as a serious threat to its special relationship with the United States; the shocked French saw unification as shifting Europe's center of political gravity from Paris to Berlin. America might no longer be dominant, but it ought to be able to influence, or even shape, the balance of power in Europe. Doing so might mean having to abet efforts by France and Britain to constrain Germany, Europe's colossus, when or if that should become desirable.

The concerns of the diplomats were borne out, they thought, in Houston in July of 1990. The occasion was the annual summit meeting of the G-7—shorthand for the group of seven major hard-currency countries. The meeting was a turning point in the Administration's relations with Kohl's Germany. Among the agenda items were talks aimed at strengthening the world trade system. These are tied to GATT—the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The Administration saw as the chief obstacle to progress the unreasonably high price supports for agriculture in various member countries of the E.C.—especially France. Bush and Kohl reached an understanding in Houston, or so Bush thought, that Bonn would somehow oblige the French to take on their farmers and scale down price supports. But there was no formal agreement, the Germans say—only a stated willingness on their part to try to persuade Paris to accommodate Washington. The Administration, they add, was asking them to throw their weight around, and thereby vindicate the unification angst in Paris, which in any case would not make concessions to Washington via Bonn.

Administration people began complaining privately about lacking the money and leverage that a stronger European policy would require. Europeans—Germans, especially—note derisively that the Administration is subcontracting important pieces of its policy, as in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. A fine edge of irony runs through the argument. Providing more financial aid to Eastern Europe and former republics of the Soviet Union is only one of the ways by which Germany is securing its base in this region. High German interest rates attract capital from America and elsewhere, which is used not only to finance the costs of unification but also to promote German industrial development throughout Eastern Europe. Briefly, America, with its feeble economy and its huge deficit, may feel unable to contribute much in the way of support for Eastern Europe, but American dollars do play a role, though not visibly.

"Contradictory" would be a fair description of Administration policy toward the former Soviet Union. The weaker Gorbachev became, the more Gorbocentric the policy became. After having spent nine months or so questioning Gorbachev's bona fides, Bush and Baker never discovered the limits of his role at home or his political weight there. As history's agent of change, he did become a figure of enormous consequence. At another level, he was a reformer—gifted and courageous, but driven quixotically by a notion that the



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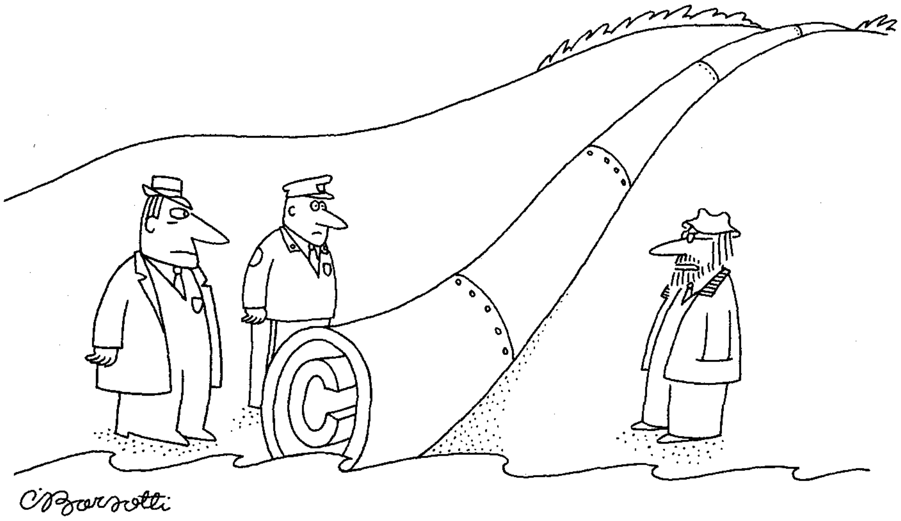

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moribund Soviet system could be saved. The Administration saw Boris Yeltsin not for what he was—the only available alternative to anarchy, or worse—but as a threat to Gorbachev and the status quo. As late in Gorbachev's day as August 1, 1991, Bush was warning a parliamentary audience in Kiev—which is now the capital of an independent state, Ukraine—against breaking away. "Freedom is not the same as independence," he said. "Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism. They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred." After equating freedom with democracy, he said pointedly that "democracy has begun to set firm roots in Soviet soil."

The speech (which became known as the "chicken Kiev" speech) was a White House rewrite of a State Department draft. Bush himself inserted the phrase "suicidal nationalism." He was described to me as believing that he was protecting human rights and strengthening the Soviet Union. Just eighteen days later, the anti-Gorbachev coup was staged. It failed, barely. Politically, Gorbachev had been a spent force for some time, and the Soviet Union was unravelling. But Washington was still not wholly convinced.

The contradictory nature of the policy pursued by Bush and Baker was pointed up by their handling of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START, talks. "I saw the chance to rid our children's dreams of a nuclear nightmare, and I did," Bush said in his Convention acceptance speech at the Houston Astrodome last August. He had inherited a draft START agreement that was close to completion. The handful of missing pieces involved both matters of substance and marginalia. Finishing up was hardly a formidable task, especially with Gorbachev able and willing to make concessionary deals, within limits. In its first year, the Administration did virtually nothing to move the process along. Then Bush and Gorbachev, after their initial meeting, in December of 1989, committed themselves to completing the START agreement before the end of 1990. Gorbachev came to Washington in May of that year. His political difficulties were surfacing, and within America's foreign-policy community it was felt that the remaining differences vis-à-vis START should be thrashed out at the summit—while there was still time. They weren't, and Gorbachev's troubles worsened. He began to maneuver away from the center toward his party's hard right, which shared its American counterpart's aversion to the arms-control process.

During the fall, there was talk of an imminent coup against Gorbachev. In December, Shevardnadze called attention to that prospect during a grim but prophetic speech to the Soviet parliament, in which he shocked those present—apparently even Gorbachev—by resigning as Foreign Minister; some passages of the speech could have been written by a Greek tragedian. By then, Bush and Baker were dealing with a Soviet leader who no longer held the high cards politically and had seemed for some time to have lost his bearings. Still, the START talks dragged on, partly because of Washington's trifling, and to some extent because the Soviet line hardened as Gorbachev's position weakened. The agreement was finally signed on July 31, 1991. It drew generally good notices, reducing substantially the number of nuclear weapons deployed by the parties against each other. But it could have been completed, signed, and ratified much sooner.

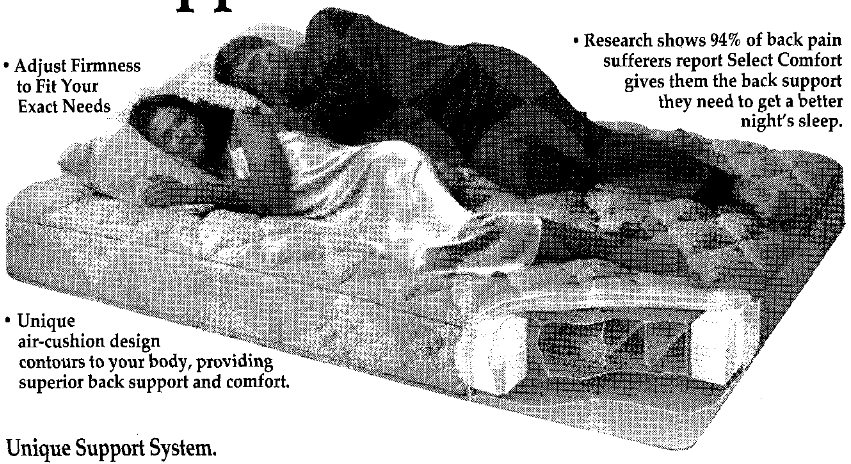
The attempted coup against Gorbachev—coming, as it did, just nineteen days after the signing ceremony—provoked a number of what ifs. What if, for example, the coup had succeeded? Would the agreement have held up? Who could say? The Soviet Union ceased to exist four months after START was signed, and the process of disintegration was already well along. But a more relevant question was: What if the agreement had been made one or two years earlier? Three of the breakaway republics—Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Byelarus—had nuclear weapons deployed on their territory; upon becoming independent, they could have, but probably would not have, repudiated an international agreement that had been ratified and set firmly in place; doing so would have got them off on the wrong foot not just with the United States but with all the countries whose support they would need. However, with the treaty turning up at the eleventh hour, these three new states would somehow have to be made part of the START agreement if it was ever to take effect. It still hasn't. After months of arm-twisting and meetings that ended badly, Russia and the three other states met in Lisbon last May and signed a protocol to the START treaty which made all of them part of it. But so far only Kazakhstan has ratified the agreement. Russia refuses to ratify it unless and until the Ukrainians sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or N.P.T.—a self-denying ordinance that is intended to discourage proliferation. And in Washington diplomats have wondered aloud through most of the year why the Administration hasn't used its leverage—hasn't put heavier pressure on

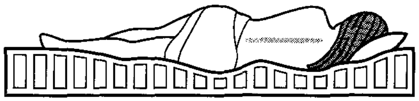
Ukraine to sign the N.P.T. and also ratify START. The concern is, or should be, that Ukraine's leadership, which is creating a large Army, may actually try to make a mini nuclear power of the country.

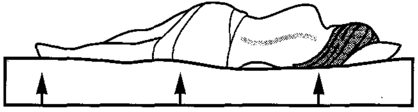
THE Bush-Baker conduct of relations with Japan is more roundly and widely deplored than perhaps any other aspect of the Administration's foreign policy. Other governments, most of which now think of Japan as America's single most important bilateral tie, complain about the Japan-bashing that goes on in Washington. They equate stability in East Asia with reliably good relations between America and Japan. Here and there within the American bureaucracy, though, one hears about Japan's having replaced the Soviet Union as America's No. 1 adversary. (Others, including a few American diplomats, have applied that label to France.) Within the domestic political debate, comments on Japan's having become the world's No. 1 creditor nation, while America slides into position as the No. 1 debtor nation, feed the Administration's neuralgia. Japanese officials and diplomats, talking with colleagues in other places, including Washington, about whether the enfeebled American economy will allow the United States to sustain its leadership role in Asia's security affairs, achieve the same effect.

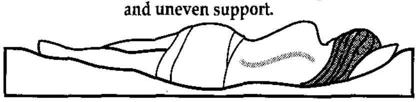
Once the Soviet threat was interred, the Administration lost no time in putting the trade issue well ahead of political interests with Japan. The Japanese were rattled. "They are not comfortable with a weaker America," Stephen Bosworth, a former diplomat who is now the president of the U.S.-Japan Foundation, says. "They want to see us strong and prosperous. The Cold War may be over, but they nonetheless feel threatened, or potentially threatened, by three countries—Russia, China, and Korea. The first two have nuclear weapons, and who can say the third won't have them one day?" If the Japanese lost confidence in American security guarantees, they would doubtless remilitarize—a move that would destabilize the entire region.

Bush and Baker—especially Baker—distanced themselves from the United States-Japan agenda; their own dealings with Japan were episodic. And, with the State Department off the scene, control









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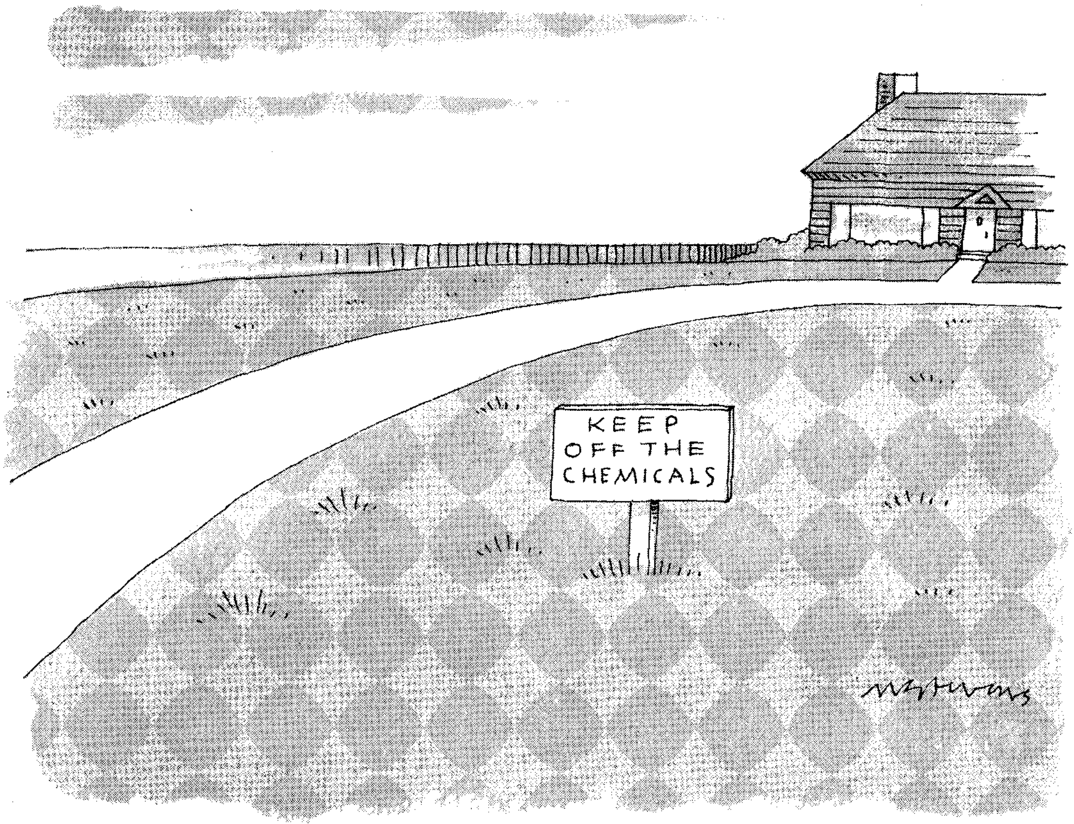
of Japanese policy was seized by other agencies—the Treasury and Commerce Departments and the office of the Special Trade Representative. In the process of sorting out foreign-policy winners and losers, the Bush-Baker tandem clearly saw Japan as falling into the latter category. Why call attention to Japan's huge trade surplus with the United States—a gap that is due partly, but not entirely, to Japan's cultural and systematic barriers to the produce and finished goods of other countries? And why, after all, strengthen ties with a society that rejects, or is accused of rejecting, the principle of conducting trade on a level playing field?

For related reasons, Bush and Baker also detached themselves from foreign economic policy in general. Doing otherwise would have required them to address a few of the heavy losers on the domestic agenda, most notably the budget deficit and the dismal level of American investment, public and private. (The United States is reported to be "out-invested" two to one by the major economic powers of Europe and Asia.) This Bush-Baker dereliction is no trivial matter: American policy, foreign *and* domestic, will be increasingly influenced, and perhaps shaped, by a global environment in which economics acquires greater weight than politics.

Japan intends to improve the balance between its political role and its vast economic clout. In developing alternatives to checkbook diplomacy, the government has acquired authority from the Diet, after some eighteen months of arduous debate, to send Japanese troops abroad to take part in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Between now and the United Nations' fiftieth anniversary, in 1995, Japan is expected to press for permanent membership in the Security Council. "No taxation without participation," the Japanese are saying, in reference to their being pressured to contribute more than their assessed share to peacekeeping operations. The Bush Administration, they complain, contributes to that pressure but doesn't consult them on political matters that directly affect their interests.

The Japanese cite the crisis in the Persian Gulf as an example of the absence of consultation. It actually became a crisis in American-Japanese relations as well, and is described as among the episodes that have defined relations between the two countries over the past three years. It was a dialogue of the deaf, with Washington insisting on a large Japanese financial contribution to the military effort, on the ground that Saddam Hussein was threatening Japan's sources of oil. Tokyo replied, with some heat, that Japan, unlike America, was energy efficient. What's more, the Japanese said, we can afford to pay more for our oil. We didn't invent this guy. You chose sides in the Iran-Iraq War and then built him up. We had nothing to do with that. Washington, with at least equal heat, accused Tokyo of taking a free ride, to which Japan pointed out that, not being a member of the Security Council, it had not been involved in any of the key decisions on the crisis, and, in any case, had not been consulted by Bush and Baker, who had, of course, been consulting other key countries. Japan did finally agree to contribute three billion dollars to the operation in the Gulf. Under heavy pressure, it ultimately agreed to produce ten billion more. At about that point, however, a fluctuation in the exchange rate took a slice from the ten billion. "Where is the other six hundred million?" Washington asked, and Tokyo replied, "Never has thirteen billion dollars bought so little."

The Japanese described themselves as flabbergasted by Bush's visit to Tokyo last January. The White House showed no sensitivity to Japanese customs, traditions, or culture—no awareness of what the Japanese would respect and not respect. The visit was shamelessly political. "Jobs, jobs, jobs!" was the Presidential battle cry. Bush's entourage included the heads of the Big Three auto companies—people who, because they had done a lot to create the trade deficit with Japan, conveyed all the wrong messages by their presence. Even their salaries were—are—ridiculed by the Japanese. Missing from the official party was Baker. "We all speculated about why he didn't go," a German diplomat says. A close Baker watcher says, "He has the instincts of a cat." Bush has had few, if any, more inglorious moments. If the visit was a low point for him, it also became a metaphor for what had gone wrong with his foreign policy, not to say the country itself.



Until recently, there was an aspect of the Bush-Baker approach which the Japanese did approve of: the relatively soft line on China. An even softer line would have pleased them more. Any sign of deterioration in Sino-American relations arouses concern in Tokyo, where agents of instability are seen lurking around every corner.

The Japanese did not react well to Bush's campaign-inspired decision a few weeks ago to sell F-16 fighter aircraft to Taiwan. He not only reversed his position on the sale but breached a commitment to China on the matter. Instantly, the horrifying prospect of an arms race in Asia rose up before the Japanese. They were already worried about what the Chinese call Washington's interference in their internal affairs. The "interference" includes throwing up barriers to the export of goods made by slave labor and of various military weapons, a few of which China has sold after agreeing not to do so. The Japanese, who will do business with almost anyone, don't fully understand the American position.

American sinologists, although they are less approving of the soft line than the Japanese are, by and large do not go along with those in Congress who advocate a hard line. They deplored the Administration's weak and belated response to the carnage in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June of 1989. And they were just as critical of the decision by Bush, who manages Chinese affairs himself, to send Brent Scowcroft to Beijing only six months after the events in Tiananmen—this after abjuring further high-level contacts with China. Photographs of the unfortunate Scowcroft toasting his hosts provoked an outcry. The Administration left the impression of being indifferent to human rights in China. Sinologists worried also that the Chinese people would see in both episodes American kowtowing (a symbolically important ritual) to a still celestial leadership.

Most diplomats approve of the Administration's China policy in outline, as do most sinologists. Extending most-favored-nation treatment to China in the trade area, although it has been deplored by numerous members of Congress, is seen by experts as essential; an important goal of our policy, they say, is to discourage Chinese self-isolation from the world. Briefly, what the experts favor is a consistent position, which makes clear our unwillingness to forgive or forget Tiananmen Square but includes taking steps to show that America hasn't lost sight of its own and the world's larger interest in China as a major nation—one that is likely to change for the better, however gradually. Nevertheless, the decision to sell the F-16s to Taiwan skews any such position badly, and may provoke a Chinese overreaction that will cause trouble on all sides.

In the Persian Gulf crisis, all the strengths of the Bush-Baker style were on display. So were its major weaknesses, if the crisis is seen in its various phases: first, a prelude that lasted several months; second, a period in which the United Nations Security Council smacked Iraq with the toughest set of sanctions within memory, and an American-led coalition prepared for war; third, the war itself; and, fourth, its aftermath.

Before and during the prelude, the policy was to make a lot of short-term gains against Iran, and doing that seemed to mean appeasing Saddam rather than dealing with him as he really was. There was no reassessment of the region after the Iran-Iraq War. Bush's people never really updated what little work was done at that time.

The tendency to shun losers largely explains why Bush and Baker ignored the tangled affairs of the Persian Gulf. Also, in the summer of 1990 the Administration was preoccupied with Kohl and Gorbachev—their bargaining over the terms of German unification. The big trouble brewing in the Gulf didn't capture the attention of State's seventh floor until late June or early July.

American policy in the Gulf—a decades-old legacy from the British—was simple and straightforward: no regional power could be allowed to control the Persian Gulf's oil. Saddam's coup de main in Kuwait posed the unacceptable threat. The Administration's reaction to it was in many ways as prompt and as tactically masterly as its reaction had been to the collapse of the Berlin Wall. But, except for driving Saddam from Kuwait, Bush and Baker never defined their goals and purposes in the affair. These remained buried in doubt and uncertainty.

The second phase of the crisis reveals

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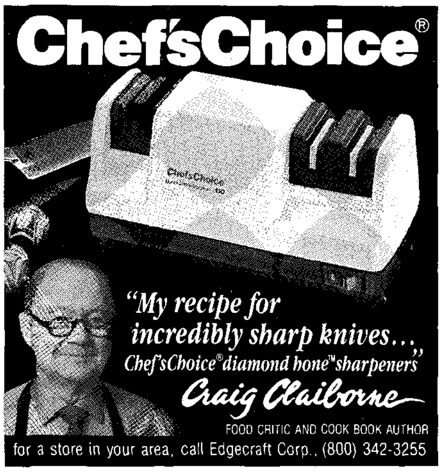

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an enigmatic George Bush who, with a strong assist from his United Nations Ambassador, Thomas R. Pickering, took the lead in putting together the sanctions, yet was planning to scuttle them whenever his military advisers reported their preparations for war as completed. Bush, it now appears, had wanted a military solution from the first. Baker and Cheney hadn't, but had thought that Saddam would back off when confronted by a huge array of force.

Saddam and Bush misread each other badly. According to Arab diplomats, Saddam reckoned that America would not use force against him, especially since Bush and Gorbachev were absorbed by Germany and the aftermath of the Cold War. Saddam also miscalculated, those diplomats say, in believing that if force was used there would be no follow-through—that it would be a single blow, which he would survive, and that he would emerge politically the stronger for having survived it. Bush miscalculated in assuming that Saddam would back down, never understanding that once an Arab leader has been threatened he is unlikely to do any such thing. And Bush badly miscalculated by personalizing the conflict: he talked about "kicking ass"; and the foreign-policy community wondered how a President could compare an adversary to Hitler, as Bush did, and allow him to survive the bunker. Bush ought to have ignored Saddam. Instead, he treated him, in effect, as a peer, thus making it harder for his own people to pull him down.

As for the war, Bush's bold decision to go to the mat with Saddam was vindicated—for a time, at least. If the outcome was never in doubt, Bush did accept the risk of heavy casualties in the ground war. Victory in just a hundred hours exceeded the highest hopes of the people in charge. But even before the bands stopped playing, doubts and questions arose, some of which are with us still. Saddam was able to withhold his best troops; like him, they are still in place. The allied coalition rolled over cannon fodder, killing no one knows how many; conservative estimates hovered at around a hundred thousand. The damage to the country was indescribable—a people brutalized because of the tyrant's miscalculation. But what to do next? Going on to Baghdad—taking control of, and political responsibility for, Iraq itself—was a poor idea, and no one favored it. But what were the collateral purposes of the fighting? To destroy Saddam's war machine? To whittle him down to manageable size—humiliate him in the eyes of the Arab street? And what about the post-ceasefire strategy—the political endgame—if, indeed, there was one? There wasn't. The Administration had been talking about a regional security structure for the Persian Gulf countries. Upon the victors in the war lay a heavy responsibility—and a unique opportunity—to create just such a structure. Bush and Baker nonetheless turned their backs on what was then their and the world's most important task.

It was this tendency to avoid losers while concentrating on potential winners that pushed the Administration to abdicate a constructive role in the Gulf's postwar affairs and go all out for Middle East talks, according to close Bush-Baker watchers. Whatever the political reasoning, these talks are likely to be judged the Administration's largest achievement—a more historic contribution than helping Germany unify on the right terms. Perhaps none of the issues in the talks will be settled, wholly or partly, under Bush's auspices; nevertheless, history will say that the tactics—and, indeed, the strategy—that he and Baker adopted led to an opportunity that had not before existed.

Diplomats point out that the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a disruptive force was essential to the process. And Congress became an arena for some of the skirmishing that ensued between the Administration and the government of Yitzhak Shamir, who was Israel's prime minister until a few months ago. Several members—Republicans and Democrats alike—agreed with Bush that Israel's leadership had to be jerked up. Politicians had become somewhat less fearful of Washington's high-powered pro-Israeli lobby; Shamir's confrontational style was creating splits within the American Jewish community. Here, again, timing worked in the Administration's favor.

The strategy was to maneuver the

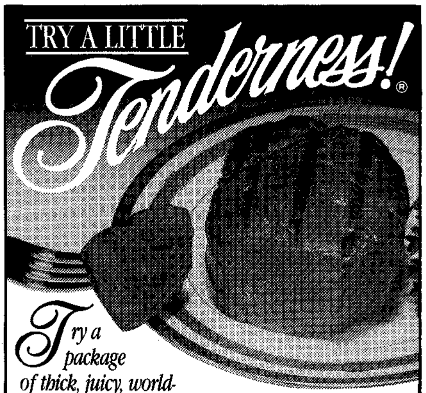
parties to the table while avoiding prior discussion of such gut issues as land for peace and Israeli settlements on the West Bank. "The key question was: Who would be left holding the onus?" a closely involved American diplomat says. "Would it be the Arabs or Washington or Yitzhak Shamir? The strategy was aimed at forcing Shamir to self-destruct, and it worked brilliantly. We never interfered in Israel's domestic affairs or gave Shamir a club to beat us with. He was hugely successful in strictly domestic politics, but he was in over his head in dealing with the United States and the outside world. Yet we needed both sides. How to get them? Shamir provided the answer by demanding a ten-billion-dollar loan guarantee from us and taking on the Administration frontally."

It was no secret that Bush and Baker wanted to maneuver public opinion in Israel against Shamir. But they couldn't hit the fault line in Israeli politics until it had been made clear that American aid was not a blank check politically. Shamir's request for the loan guarantee with which to settle immigrants from the former Soviet Union couldn't be separated from the peace process, if only because Arab states had made it an issue. They insisted that Washington link the loans to a freeze on Israeli settlements in occupied territories. Bush and Baker willingly obliged. A great many Israelis, including the mayors of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, accepted the linkage: they placed more importance on receiving the aid than on sustaining the settlements, and popular pressure to spend the money to house immigrants in Israel, not on the West Bank, rose steadily. It might appear that Washington, watching the drama proceed, had only to remain firm on settlements and await the arrival of a new government, and that did, of course, happen. However, getting all the disputing parties to the conference table for the first time was very difficult. Getting them there a second time and then again and again, with highly sensitive issues reaching the table, was harder still; it has been an elegant performance, applauded by the entire foreign-policy community.

INCREASINGLY, the United Nations is a venue for testing the policies of major powers on the issues that are rising up in this intensely transitional period. The Bush Administration's attitude toward the United Nations is little different from its predecessors'. Occasional swings from negative to ambivalent, with brief stops on positive, is as good a description of it as any. Before the Persian Gulf crisis, State's seventh floor all but ignored the United Nations, which admittedly is something of a mishmash and a difficult organization to work with. Leadership on the sixth floor was exercised by Assistant Secretary John R. Bolton, a former outrider for Senator Jesse Helms, and latterly of the Justice Department when Edwin Meese was Attorney General. Bolton made no effort to conceal his role as custodian of right-wing interests. Bush and Baker did, of course, use the United Nations very effectively in the early months of the Gulf crisis. Afterward, their interest fell off quickly.

Two recent episodes point up the Bush-Baker view of America's stake in the United Nations' operations. The first concerned the selection of a new Secretary-General last autumn. There was a long list of candidates, many of them distinguished, others less so. Most candidates were from developing countries, and the expectation was that one of them would be chosen—as, indeed, happened. Egypt's Boutros Boutros Ghali was selected. Bush, however, was secretly planning to run a dark horse—Canada's Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, whose government's poll ratings stood then at twelve per cent. Mulroney had little interest in fighting another election. Twice in the summer of 1991, he and Bush discussed the United Nations job. In selecting the United Nations' new chief, the United States had the Security Council vote that mattered most; Bush would probably have had a virtually free hand in choosing among the "serious" candidates. But he had no chance whatsoever of parachuting the lowly regarded Mulroney into the United Nations. Bush's ploy, when it surfaced late last October, was ridiculed, especially in Canada, and the United States' nomination of Mulroney dropped from sight.

The other episode—less preposterous but seamier—involved the career and the reputation of Thomas Pickering, Bush's handpicked Ambassador to the U.N. Experienced foreign diplomats who served with Pickering in New York



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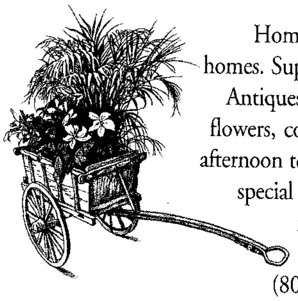

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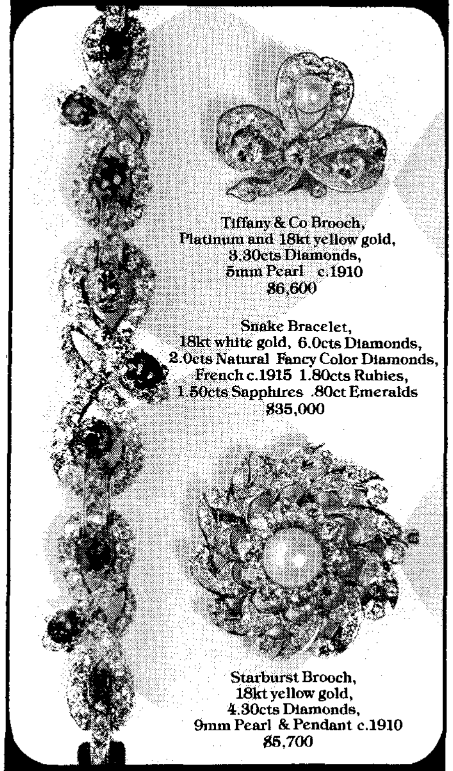

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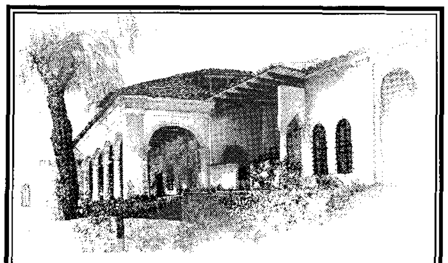

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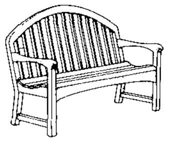


describe him not only as exceptional but also as one of the most capable ambassadors they've ever seen anywhere. His American colleagues regard him as among the best that the career service has produced. Early in the Persian Gulf crisis, while the United Nations resolutions were being cobbled together, Pickering was often in the spotlight—unavoidably. The United Nations Embassy is unlike any other; any American Ambassador who serves there in a period of high international tension gets noticed. One has only to think of Adlai E. Stevenson, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and Daniel P. Moynihan. Probably no American Ambassador to the United Nations has ever had a more challenging hand to play there as Pickering had during the Gulf crisis. The problem lay in his having done his work too well: his good notices were reflected in a conspicuously good press. Sotto-voce grumbling about Pickering began to be heard on the seventh floor. (Having been chosen by Bush personally may not have done Pickering any good with Baker or with Margaret Tutwiler, who monitors Baker's interests.) Then, last November 12th, an article about Pickering in the Washington *Post* said, "Some close to Baker … see Pickering as a self-promoter and not a team player, although he rarely gives interviews to the news media and says little of substance when he does." The latter part of that comment was accurate, the first part malicious. Pickering is self-effacing, low-key, and a model of discretion, as all those who know him, including Baker and Tutwiler, are aware. The phrase "some close to Baker" can be read as meaning Tutwiler. Pickering was eased out of the United Nations job early this year, amid a fair amount of press attention, some of which contained other unattributed references to unteamly behavior. His current job—Ambassador to India—would appear to put sufficient distance between him and Washington.

The Mulroney and Pickering episodes had a dispiriting effect on diplomats, on members of the United Nations Secretariat, and on some foreign capitals. Washington was showing a cold indifference to the United Nations, even though a number of countries, including the United States, rely increasingly on its peacekeeping operations. The organization is overburdened and underfinanced. America is the largest delinquent, with an arrearage of seven hundred and thirty-three million dollars. Politically, the United Nations is becoming a minefield. Like Japan, Germany intends to obtain permanent membership on the Security Council. Even to think of adding them both, while also considering claims for similar status being put forward by Brazil, India, and possibly Nigeria, will tax the ingenuity and the diplomacy of all major governments. In today's Washington, however, the United Nations catches the attention of the leadership only when a problem arises that can be dealt with nowhere else. Yugoslavia is an example.

WHETHER Bush wins or loses, the continuing tragedy of Yugoslavia will be part of his and Baker's legacy. At the least, it underlined the flaw in their insular management style. The machine didn't work: at State, the sixth floor's concerns about Yugoslavia weren't heard on the seventh until a potentially bad situation had become an operational problem that needed prompt attention. The leadership then looked away: Yugoslavia was an obvious loser, best left to the diplomacy and the moderating influence of the European Community. But the E.C. quite clearly lacked the cohesion, the experience, and the credibility that were required to affect the course of events. It even lacked a consensus view. What little the E.C. did do caused more harm than good. As for Bush and Baker, what they mainly did in the months that preceded the worst of the violence and the atrocities was talk about what they wouldn't do in Yugoslavia.

History will probably judge the high points of the Bush-Baker experience as very high. The Administration will be seen as having been resolute when it chose to be resolute, as in the Gulf crisis and German unification. On two counts, however, history's judgment is likely to dim the high points. First, Bush and Baker will not be excused for neglecting the domestic agenda; no President can deal effectively with either the foreign-policy agenda or the domestic agenda at the expense of the other. Second, history is likely to say that Bush and Baker, after helping to create the conditions in which a new world order might develop, steered clear of the enterprise. ♦

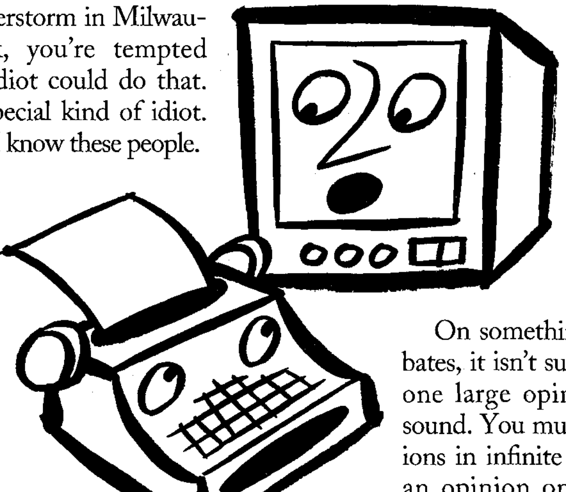
DEPARTMENT OF SECOND THOUGHTS

MAMAS, DON'T LET YOUR BABIES GROW UP TO BE PUNDITS

by Michael Kinsley

YOU probably think it's easy being a pundit. Eric Alterman thinks it's heaven. As he demonstrates in his new book, "Sound & Fury: The Washington Punditocracy and the Collapse of American Politics," pundits now rule the world, or at least the United States. Pundits command and official Washington obeys, and no one cares that the pundits are usually wrong.

From afar, it must look like a pretty soft life, making a living just spouting opinions. Sitting in front of the TV, watching the members of "The McLaughlin Group" as they rate on a scale of one to ten the likelihood of a thunderstorm in Milwaukee next week, you're tempted to think, Any idiot could do that. But it takes a special kind of idiot. Not to brag, but I know these people.



ANDERS WENNGREN

Favoring friends and family with beautifully wrought opinions about Ross Perot or the North American Free Trade Agreement in the comfort of your own home, you're like the competent amateur cook who thinks it would be neat to run a restaurant. But the professional pundit's life is hell. It's opine, opine, opine, day in and day out, until you never want to have another opinion again.

What used to be one of the day's great pleasures—perusing the newspapers over morning coffee—becomes a nightmare. At the crack of dawn, even as the professional restaurateur is out selecting fresh vegetables and fish so his customers can later enjoy a leisurely dinner, the professional pundit is feverishly assembling the day's haul of fresh opinions. Here's this morning's *Times*. "SENATE PASSES BILL TO CHARGE MAKERS FOR DRUG APPROVAL." *Shit*. What do I think of that? "C.I.A. CHIEF ORDERS INVESTIGATION OF STATEMENTS IN IRAQ BANK CASE." That headline contains at least three words—"C.I.A.," "investigation," and "bank"—that together carry the powerful subliminal message "Do not read this article. Life is too short." But for the pundit there is no escape.

"NEW USE IS FOUND FOR ABORTION PILL" . . . "MAOIST CHIEF IN PERU IS SENTENCED TO LIFE" (hmm, sounds like a good thing—but is there a catch?). . . . We're still on the *Times* front page and we haven't even got to the eighteen stories dissecting the Presidential debates.

On something like the debates, it isn't sufficient to have one large opinion, however sound. You must supply opinions in infinite layers. Having an opinion on who won or will win is like being able to boil water. You have to have an opinion about whether the draft thing is backlashing against Bush, how Clinton should exploit Iraqgate, the potential effect of a decline in viewership between debates two and three, suits and ties: do they matter?, participating journalists: are they ethically compromised?, etc., etc.

And the eternal quest for novelty! The amateur home chef can re-create exquisite opinions by the masters—a view on the Maastricht treaty borrowed from George Will, a sermonette on voter alienation from a recipe by David Broder. But the professional pundit must concoct something different,

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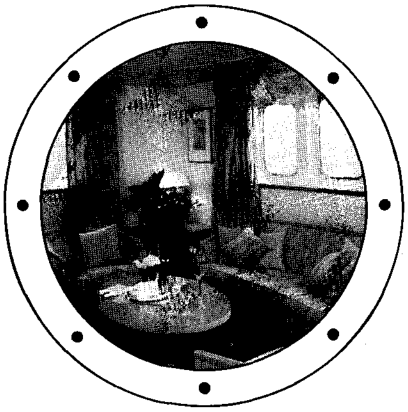

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something with a dash of originality. In a field as thoroughly picked over as the Presidential debates, this requires flirting with absurdity: Can I get away with predicting that Stockdale will be the sure winner in the veepstakes? What if I say Perot's handling of foreign policy will be the key thing to watch for? Will that fly?

Punditry, you see, is not for the fainthearted. It doesn't matter whether what you say actually turns out to be correct. ("Never look back" is the watchword of our profession.) The fear is merely that a pearl of analysis will sound just too ridiculous at the time it is uttered. But the path between the sheer drop-offs of absurdity on the one side and banality on the other can be mighty narrow.

TV punditry adds a whole extra layer of terror, mainly of being exposed as an ignoramus. It's ten seconds to showtime and you suddenly realize you have no idea where Somalia is. You're on the air, opinions are flying like shrapnel, and you're about to demand that Nicholas Brady be fired as the Secretary of the Treasury when a small voice in your head whispers, "Are you *absolutely sure* he's not the Secretary of Commerce?" The words freeze in your throat. You gurgle. You decide to play it safe and demand that Richard Darman be fired as the head of the Office of Management and Budget. (*Wait!* Or is it the Council of Economic Advisers? Too late. . . .)

Is this man I'm talking to Senator Domenici or Senator DeConcini? And is he the one in the Keating Five or was it the other guy? (What was the Keating Five again?) Someone calling himself Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire sits before you declaiming about big-spending Democrats. It's your turn to interrupt, but the only thing on your mind is: Can there really be a senator named Bob Smith? ("Senator, this is not a motel. What is your real name?")

Fast-moving world events generate intense pronunciation paranoia and a vicious competitive snobbery among the talking heads. Just think: once upon a time it was a mark of sophistication to know that Gorbachev is pronounced Gorba-*chawv.* That didn't last long, but at least in those days the proper pronunciation of Gorbachev was about all you needed in order to have a third of the globe covered. The rise of Eduard Shevardnadze was an ominous portent. These days, you get no credit at all for knowing that Vaclav is pronounced *Vaht*-slahv, and successfully condemning "Slobodan Milosevic" for the rape of "Bosnia-Herzegovina" is barely a warm-up routine for opining on daily news out of the former Soviet bloc.

Yet to control the world would surely be worth some televised embarrassment. Alterman's eccentric but flattering argument is that pundits are more influential in the screaming TV age than they were in the stately days of Walter Lippmann. That's because, he says, the other institutions of democracy have decayed—politicians speak in tongues, the parties barely exist, unions and other voluntary organizations have retreated from the national stage—and the rest of the press is hamstrung by the conventions of "objectivity." Pundits reign supreme.

True, there is a downside. Because of pundit power, "our economy, our security, and most particularly our democracy are imperiled by the decrepit state of our national political discourse." But this is surely a small price to pay for the thrill of seeing strong governments wilt at the drop of your sound bite.

I must confess I hadn't noticed this power myself. But it's an interesting thesis. Give me a minute and I'll have an opinion about it. ♦

MAILBOX

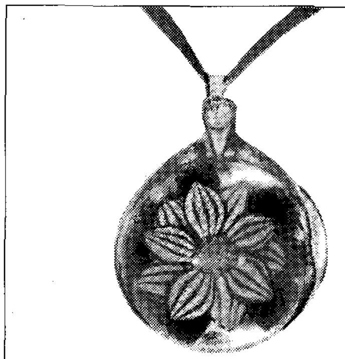
To the Editor:

In Joan Juliet Buck's story on Daniel Day-Lewis, "Actor from the Shadows" (October 12th), Tamasin Day-Lewis is quoted as saying, "I sussed that in a sense it would bring him back to a life and a reality that would give him a focus and a structure." I assume that she actually said "supposed" or "suspected."

PAMELA TAMARKIN REIS
Branford, Conn.

"Suss" means "suspect" or "figure out." It's one of those Britishisms, like "cess" and "fug," which probably came from centuries of poor enunciation.

THE EDITORS



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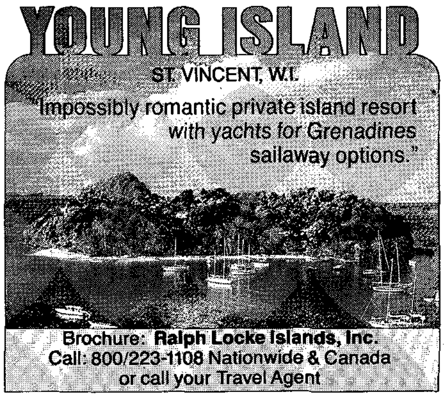

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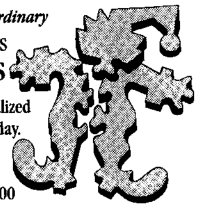

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COUCH REPORTER

BOX POPULI

by Harold Brodkey

IN last Thursday's Presidential debate, the second and probably the decisive encounter, Hollywood's cynical political comedies of the thirties made their long-delayed entry into the real political world. The oddity, or grotesquerie, went well beyond the debates-that-aren't-debates problem, to the media, and, more specifically, to the men in the media. The hunger for bloodshed, the wish for the candidates to mix it up, the conventions of putative evenhandedness, perhaps even an abiding wish to protect Bush in certain ways from his younger, more virile challenger seemed to guarantee inadequate and nearly mindless comment, adding up to a point-blank refusal to accept Clinton's clear superiority in the debate. It's hard to know whether the media men refuse to deal with the issues and facts Clinton so relentlessly discusses because they don't know much about these matters, or because such discussion has been out of fashion during the reign of the conservatives and they've wanted to stay in step, or because of some misplaced sophistication about campaigns, campaign lies, and the realities of governing.

The lack of dignity of the "Donahue" format was simply denied by John Chancellor and others, who were impressed but inarticulate about what they saw. Chancellor said, idiotically, "The big story tonight is certainly Bush's unaggressiveness." One newspaperman even judged Perot sadly: "He wasn't funny tonight."

No one I heard on the night of the debate except David Gergen and Robin MacNeil on PBS, and no one I came across in the local papers the next morning except Maureen Dowd in the *Times* and Lars-Erik Nelson in the *News*, remarked on the triumph the occasion was for Clinton. The morning TV shows seemed to have caught up and caught on, but the admissions were, on the whole, either grudging or hesitant.

If there is no name-calling, if some sensible talk is heard, that is enough for the occasion to be called dignified. But in truth the spectacle was shabby and grating—and human. Ross Perot behaved like a fool, reciting the schedule of his TV half-hour slots. He is bankrupt intellectually, and he loses his aura of common sense when his desire to sell himself gets too strong for him. Clinton was loose and used his personality, which is that of, guess what, a populist prophet in the line of Truman and William Jennings Bryan, but educated and New Age. Bush is an aging Shakespearean figure, caught by his own history, betrayed and abandoned by nearly everyone; he is possibly ill, most likely worried about scandals breaking and to come. He seemed concerned chiefly not with gaining one more victory—some of the commentators said disapprovingly that Bush had "no fire in his belly"—but with establishing his place in history, his own human merits as they will be seen by history, and the triumphs of his Administration as he sees them: he wants them understood and memorialized. Carole Simpson, the moderator, was nervous and intrusive and assertive—but without result, since she couldn't get any of the candidates to talk directly about race. Clinton used voice tonality and body English, a different kind of *Read my lips* thing, to imply indirectly that he was concerned about racism and would attempt to do something about it, although not as liberal scolding but as a matter of American community.

Of course, it isn't easy, it may not be possible, with men of power caught up in a competition for office, to get them to answer directly. We saw a dance of politic responses, during which Clinton emerged as stronger, more confident, and more interesting than his fading rival; and Bush, for the only time in the last twelve years that I know of, actually spoke as himself—although from behind the Bushman mask. He is an aristocrat of an American sort and is simply baffled in the face of ordinary American middle-class life. He hopes to win on abstract points of competence, on being

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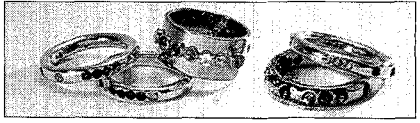

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the exotically superior figure you can—or must, in the end—trust.

To win overseas, as he claims to have done—giving no credit to history, or even to Reagan—the country had to undergo sacrifices. Bush couldn't speak of that; the childlike nature of America prevented him. He is a deeply secretive, devious man, trained in business and in the C.I.A. The condescension in the man, the sense of his own greatness, the sense of his own background dominated every gesture and every speech. He addressed the audience as if they were children. He apologized for using the word "portable." Such a big word! And, "When we went out to South Central in Los Angeles—some of you may remember the riots there." He tried to keep his eyes visible, but they closed down to slits almost at once. He was also small-minded and untrusting—a combat pilot in very truth—whose tactic over and over was to focus on some small, safe, winning thing. When he was asked to talk about health care, he focussed on malpractice suits. His strength of will was visible, and so were the limits of that strength. The tactics and strategies that brought him to the White House have burdened him with a history he himself distrusts.

As Clinton may have foreseen but certainly understood while it was happening, all this greatness alienated a directly human, involved audience, who were concerned for themselves and their lives and didn't give a damn for Bush's place in history. Democracy at work means that Coriolanus is despised. The camera shots of Barbara Bush were terrifying: she looked ugly and savage—beaten in one sense, even grieving, but indomitable, indomitably malevolent, in another sense. She seemed to be a Greek figure of baffled rage. But she, too, seemed human. One senses that she considers her husband to have overseen one of the greatest military-nonmilitary triumphs in history—the collapse of the Soviet Union—and that what she sees now in the terrifying American populace is silence and jealousy, human and low, without regard or gratitude for her or her family. The price of high office, the ambitions and betrayals of assistants and underlings, the isolation—these things have told on them both.

It is the prophetic element in Clinton that has seemed so slippery and some-

THE DOLLS' MUSEUM IN DUBLIN

The wounds are terrible. The paint is old.
The cracks along the lips and on the cheeks
cannot be fixed. The cotton lawn is soiled.
The arms are ivory dissolved to wax.

Recall the Quadrille. Hum the waltz.
Promenade on the yacht-club terraces.
Put back the lamps in their copper holders,
the carriage wheels on the cobbled quays.

Re-create Easter in Dublin.
Booted officers. Their mistresses.
Sunlight crisscrossing College Green.
Steam hissing from the flanks of horses.

Here they are. Cradled and cleaned,
Held close in the arms of their owners.
Their cold hands clasped by warm hands,
Their faces memorized like perfect manners.

The altars are mannerly with linen.
The lilies are whiter than surplices.
The candles are burning and warning:
Rejoice, they whisper. After sacrifice.

Horse chestnuts hold up their candles.
The Green is vivid with parasols.
Sunlight is pastel and windless.
The bar of the Shelbourne is full.

Laughter and gossip on the terraces.
Rumor and alarm at the barracks.
The Empire is summoning its officers.
The carriages are turning: they are turning back.

Past children walking with governesses,
looking down and cosseting their dolls,
then looking up as the carriage passes,
the shadow chilling them. Twilight falls.

It is twilight in the dolls' museum. Shadows
remain on the parchment-colored waists,
are bruises on the stitched cotton clothes,
are hidden in the dimples on the wrists.

The eyes are wide. They cannot address
a helplessness, which has lingered in
the airless peace of each glass case:
To have survived. To have been stronger than

a moment. To be the hostages ignorance
takes from time and ornament from destiny. Both.
To be the present of the past. To infer the difference
with a terrible stare. But not feel it. And not know it.

—Eavan Boland

times sleazy and then so impressive. He worked the audience, and although after a while this was a little unctuous and phony, he seemed almost inspired in conveying his message of committed ordinariness and of hands-on government favoring the statistical mainstream, the standard middling mass. It was clear and not entirely implicit that he is offering us a type of corporate state on the Scandinavian order, but not so idealistic or so culturally framed. Rather, ours would be directly tied to our electoral realities, to the conditions and fevers of the statistical mass, the center classes and elements of the upper-level working classes, omitting the rich and the poor, although not without sops thrown to each, and omitting the nutty fringes that Bush has embraced.

Clinton also seemed to be implying that he would concentrate on the new elements in the mix—women and educated blacks—with the purpose of changing the educational levels of the country, reinvigorating the schools, restoring rural and small-town infrastructures, and offering inner cities enterprise parks and self-government. He is some kind of populist prophet, by God.

Bush's heroic-pitiable last line about choosing him for crisis management is why Europeans have thought all along that he would start a Bush brush war in an attempt to steal the election. But it was the old, crinkly, nobly rich, insufferably petty, sly fighter pilot talking about the one thing he does well. That was all.

But the media's initial reaction was to ignore what we in the viewing audience saw—what we recognized in the faces and events, what we heard said by the public and by the candidates, and the way they said it. And in the media's first, dreary, self-protective interpretations, Clinton's clear-cut victory and the audience's less clear-cut triumph were unacknowledged, invisible. ♦

Around 54% of the respondents work for companies whose primary business is environmental engineering, while 37% say some portion of their firms' business is related to the field, and nearly 6% work for concerns which generate hazardous waste.

Men comprised 87.8% of survey respondents; 10.4% were women.—*Engineering News-Record.*

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

CRISIS IN THE HOT ZONE

by Richard Preston

Particles of the Ebola Reston virus, which broke out near Washington, D.C., in 1989. Its close relative Ebola Zaire emerged in fifty-five African villages in 1976, and killed nine out of ten of its victims.

COURTESY OF: THOMAS GEISBERT/USAMRI

THE main building of the United States Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases is an essentially windowless concrete block that covers several acres at Fort Detrick, an Army base in Frederick, Maryland, fifteen miles east of Antietam. Military people call the structure the Institute, or they call it by its acronym, USAMRIID, drawling it as You Sam Rid. Or they call the place RIID, as in getting rid of something. Vent stacks on its roof discharge filtered exhaust air from sealed biological laboratories inside the building. Fort Detrick, the envelope of USAMRIID, sits in rolling country on the eastern slope of the Appalachian Mountains, in the drainage of the Potomac River. The Potomac bends through oak-blanketed mountains at Harpers Ferry and enters farmland, and eventually passes near Reston, Virginia, a town outside the Washington Beltway where farms give way to business parks, and where in the eighties office buildings accreted like crystals.

The mission of USAMRIID is medical defense. The Institute conducts research into ways to protect soldiers against biological weapons and natural infectious diseases. It specializes in vaccines, drug therapy, and biocontainment. That is, the Institute knows methods for stopping a monster virus before it ignites an explosive chain of lethal transmission in the human race. The laboratory suites at USAMRIID are maintained at four levels of biological security. The levels go from Biosafety Level 1, which is the lowest, up to Biosafety Level 4, the highest. The Biosafety Level 4 rooms contain BL-4 agents, also known as hot agents. A BL-4 hot agent is a lethal virus for which, in most cases, there is no vaccine and no cure. It is in the nature of hot agents to travel through the air: they can become airborne. The hot agents live in the hot suites in blood serum and bits of meat, frozen at -70° Centigrade. All the biocontainment laboratories at USAMRIID are kept under negative air pressure, so that if a leak develops air will flow *into* the hot rooms and out of the normal world, rather than the other way around. The Army does not publish a list of the viruses it keeps in the hot suites at USAMRIID, but here is a list of BL-4 viruses: Junin. Lassa. Machupo. Tick-borne encephalitis virus complex. Guanarito. Crimean-Congo. Marburg. Ebola Sudan. Ebola Zaire. Ebola Reston. If you want to shake hands with one of these viruses, you had better wear a space suit. That's a federal rule. It holds equally at USAMRIID and at the Centers for Disease Control, in Atlanta, which are the only two laboratories in the United States that can handle BL-4 viruses.

To go inside a Biosafety Level 4 hot suite that contains life, first you have to strip naked. You put on surgical scrubs and then a space suit. You pull the helmet down over your head and close the suit. Then you enter an antechamber, a kind of air lock. It leads to Biosafety Level 4. Military people consider this air lock a gray zone, a place where two worlds meet. The air-lock doors are blazed with the international symbol for biohazard, a red trefoil that reminds me of a flower. I think it looks not unlike a red trillium, or toadshade. At USAMRIID, toadshades bloom in the gray zones.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NANCY JAAX is the chief of the pathology division of USAMRIID. She is a slender and rather beautiful woman, a doctor of veterinary medicine, forty-two years old, with curly auburn hair and green eyes. She has a brisk manner. On the job, Nancy Jaax wears a uniform consisting of green slacks and a green shirt with shoulder bars displaying the silver oak leaves of her rank. Or she wears a space suit. She is married to Colonel Gerald Jaax, who is the chief of the veterinary-medicine division at USAMRIID. The Army assigned Nancy Jaax and her husband to USAMRIID in 1979. She had just been awarded the rank of major, and she entered the pathology training program at USAMRIID as a veterinary-pathology resident. Pathologists at USAMRIID, who cut up hot tissue, are given vaccinations for lethal agents. Nancy Jaax said to me, "My vaccinations were for yellow fever, Q fever, Rift Valley—there were so many. The V.E.E., E.E.E., and W.E.E. complex, anthrax, and botulism. And, of course, rabies, since I'm a veterinarian." She had an underlying medical condition that caused her immune system to react badly to the shots: the shots made her sick. The Army therefore stopped her vaccinations and assigned her to work in a space suit in the Biosafety Level 4 suites. "There aren't any immunizations for most BL-4 agents, and that's why you work in a space suit," she explained.

In 1980, Nancy Jaax joined a group of military scientists who were performing experiments with Ebola virus on monkeys. They were infecting monkeys with Ebola and then treating them with interferon and other substances to see if the treatments stopped or weakened the disease. The purpose of the experiments was to find some chemical therapy for military personnel who might become infected with Ebola.

Ebola is one of a class of viruses known as the filoviruses. That means thread viruses. They look like spaghetti. As of this writing, the class comprises three subtypes of Ebola and a virus known as Marburg. Ebola virus is named for the Ebola River, a tributary of the Zaire (Congo) River which runs through northern Zaire. The first known emergence of Ebola Zaire—the hottest subtype of Ebola virus—happened in September, 1976, when the virus erupted simultaneously in fifty-five villages near the Ebola River. Ebola Zaire is a slate-wiper in humans. It killed eighty-eight per cent of the people it infected. Apart from rabies and the human immunodeficiency virus, H.I.V., which causes AIDS, this was the highest rate of mortality that has been recorded for a human virus. Ebola was spread mainly among family members, through contact with bodily fluids and blood. Many of the people in Africa who came down with Ebola had handled Ebola-infected cadavers. It seems that one of Ebola's paths wends to the living from the dead.

Ebola victims died about a week after the onset of the first symptom, which was a headache. The Ebola patient soon breaks into a relentless fever, and then come the complications. Ebola triggers a paradoxical combination of blood clots and hemorrhages. The patient's bloodstream throws clots, and the clots lodge everywhere, especially in the spleen, liver, and brain. This is called D.I.C., or disseminated intravascular coagulation. D.I.C. is a kind of stroke through the whole body. No one knows how Ebola triggers blood-clotting. As the strokelike condition progresses and capillaries in the internal organs become jammed with clots, the hemorrhaging begins: blood leaks out of the capillaries into the surrounding tissues. This blood refuses to coagulate. It is grossly hemolyzed, which means that its cells are broken. You are stuffed with clots, and yet you bleed like a hemophiliac who has been in a fistfight. Your skin develops bruises and goes pulpy, and tears easily, and becomes speckled with purple hemorrhages called petechiae, and erupts in a maculopapular rash that has been likened to tapioca pudding. Your intestines may fill up completely with blood. Your eyeballs may also fill with blood. Your eyelids bleed. You vomit a black fluid. You may suffer a hemispherical stroke, which paralyzes one whole side of the body and is invariably fatal in a case of Ebola. In the pre-agonal stage of the disease (the endgame), the patient leaks blood containing huge quantities of virus from the nose, mouth, anus, and eyes, and from rips in the skin. In the agonal stage, death comes from hemorrhage and shock.

People seem unable to develop protective antibodies to Ebola. You can't fight off an Ebola infection the way you fight off a cold. Ebola seems to crush the immune system. The virus perhaps makes immunosuppressant proteins. No one knows the nature of such proteins, since there aren't many virologists who care to study a virus for which there is no vaccine and no cure. (They don't want the virus to do research on them.) Immunosuppressive proteins—if, indeed, they exist—would act as molecular bombs that ruin parts of the immune system, enabling the virus to multiply without opposition.

Like all viruses, Ebola and its cousin Marburg are parasites. They can copy themselves only inside a cell. Viruses need to use a cell's equipment to reproduce. Ebola and Marburg grow promiscuously in human tissue, sprouting from cells like hair, forming tangled masses and braids and "g"s and "y"s and pigtails. Marburg-virus particles often roll up into tiny Cheerios. All filoviruses form semi-crystalline blocks inside cells, which are known as inclusion bodies. Some scientists call them bricks. The bricks may pack a cell until there's almost nothing left of the cell but bricks: the cell bloats into a sack of bricks. Then the bricks break apart into threads of virus, and the threads push through the cell wall like grass rising from seeded loam.

A classic sign of infection by Ebola or Marburg is a certain expression that invariably creeps over the patient's face as the infection progresses. The face becomes fixed and "expressionless," "masklike," "ghostlike" (in the words of doctors who have seen it), with wide, deadened, "sunken" eyes. The patient looks and sometimes behaves like a zombie. This happens because Ebola damages the brain in some way that isn't known. The classic masklike facial expression appears in all primates infected with Ebola, both monkeys and human beings. They act as if they were already embalmed, even though they are not yet dead. The personality may change: the human patient becomes sullen, hostile, agitated, or develops acute psychosis. Some have been known to escape from the hospital.

Disseminated clotting cuts off the blood supply to tissues, causing focal necrosis—dead spots in the liver, spleen, brain, kidneys, and lungs. In severe cases, Ebola kills so much tissue that after death the cadaver rapidly deteriorates. In monkeys, and perhaps in people, a sort of melting occurs, and the corpse's connective tissue, skin, and organs, already peppered with dead areas and heated with fever, begin to liquefy, and the slimes and uncoagulated blood that run from the cadaver are saturated with Ebola-virus particles. That may be one of Ebola's strategies for success.

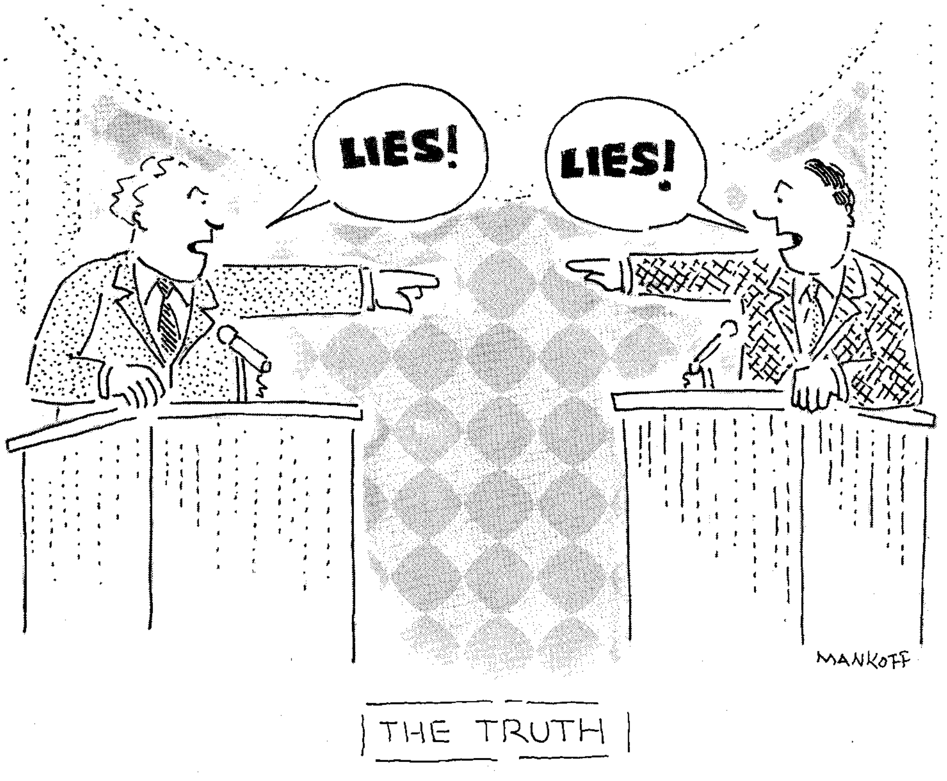
Lieutenant Colonel Nancy Jaax's job during the Army's 1980 experiments with Ebola was to dissect and examine monkeys that had died of the virus. Her space suit had triple pairs of gloves. First, there was an inner latex surgical glove. Over that, the suit had attached to it a heavy rubber glove. Over the rubber glove she wore another latex surgical glove. Her space suit and gloves were often splashed with blood as she cut into dead monkeys, and she regularly dipped her gloves in a pan of Envirochem—a liquid disinfectant that the Army believes is effective on viruses—to rinse away the blood. They use a buddy system in BL-4. You don't work alone in a hot area. The buddies are trained to glance at each other's gloves for leaks. ("The weak link is your glove," Jaax told me. "You are handling needles, knives, and sharp pieces of bone.") One day, Jaax's buddy noticed a hole in Jaax's right outer latex glove. The glove was covered with Ebola-laden blood. Jaax rinsed the glove in Envirochem and took it off, and found monkey blood inside it: the blood had run through the hole and drenched the heavy rubber glove.

Then she felt something clammy *inside* the heavy glove. She wondered if it was a leaker.

She rinsed her bloody glove and went into the air lock. There, still wearing her space suit, she pulled a chain to start the decontamination, or "decon," cycle. The decon cycle took five minutes. First, a hot-water shower came on, and then came a mist of Envirochem, which washed away any blood from the exterior of her suit, while sterilizing it. She stepped into a tub of Envirochem, bent over, put her hands in the tub, and scrubbed her booties and gloves with a brush. (In the old days, the Army's air-lock showers ran with Lysol. It kills germs, as advertised, but it made some people itch.) Then a final water shower came on and stopped. Nancy Jaax left the air lock and entered a staging area, where she stepped out of her space suit, withdrawing her latex-gloved hands from the suit's heavy gloves. As her right hand came out of the suit, she saw it was red—bloody. The suit's heavy glove had been a leaker.

The blood had smeared the innermost latex glove, right against her skin. Her heart pounded, and her stomach turned over. "I got that *oogh* feeling. That feeling you sometimes get when you work with these agents," she said. "I went, 'Oh, shit. What now? Oh, *Jesus*. What do I have to do now?' " On her right hand, under the last glove, she had an open cut in her skin. She does all the cooking for her family; she had cut herself with a paring knife while slicing vegetables, and had covered the cut with a Band-Aid. The question was whether any blood had penetrated the last glove to the Band-Aid and the cut. If so, it would amount to a death warrant. Five or ten virus particles suspended in a microscopic droplet of blood could easily slip through a pinhole in a surgical glove, and that would probably be enough to start a fatal infection. At USAMRIID, there is a group of pressurized hospital rooms designed so that patients can be treated by nurses and doctors wearing space suits. The place is an isolation hospital, and they call it the Slammer. Nancy Jaax began to wonder if she would end up in the Slammer by nightfall. She and her husband have two children. She did not want to break with Ebola virus in the Slammer and never see her children again. She dipped her last, bloody glove in Envirochem, and went over to a sink, and removed the glove. She put it under a faucet and filled it with water, like a water balloon. It held. No leaks. "This incident came into the category of close call," she said to me.

Nancy Jaax continued with the experiment, and all the monkeys that had been infected with Ebola died; the drugs had no effect on the course of the disease. She kept two control monkeys—healthy monkeys—apart from the others, in separate cages inside the hot suite. Then both control monkeys died of Ebola. They had not been injected with virus, and their cages were on the far side of the room from those of the sick monkeys. "So the question is: How did they get it?" Lieutenant Colonel Nancy Jaax said to me. "They probably got it from aerosolized droplets from the sick monkeys. That was when I knew that Ebola could spread through the air."


LIES!
LIES!
MANKOFF
THE TRUTH

A VIRUS is a small capsule consisting of membranes and proteins. The capsule holds one or more strands of RNA or DNA that contain the software program for making a copy of the virus. The virus penetrates a cell wall, and the capsule breaks apart inside the cell, releasing the strands of genetic material, which take over the cell and force it to make copies of the virus. Eventually, the cell gets pigged with virus, and pops. Or viruses can bud through a cell wall like sweat coming off a drip hose. In either case, viruses tend to kill cells. If they kill enough cells, or if they kill a class of cell that the host needs for survival, then the host dies. Viruses that kill their hosts do not themselves survive. It is in the virus's best interest to let the host live, but accidents happen. Some biologists classify viruses as "life forms"—ambiguously alive. Bacteria and cells are always humming with activity, enzymatic processes.

Bernard Schoenbaum

"I used to worship the almighty dollar, but now I'm an atheist."

• •

Viruses that are outside cells merely sit there; nothing happens. But when they get inside a cell they switch on and begin to replicate. Viruses can seem alive when they multiply, but in another sense they are molecular machines—obviously nonliving, strictly mechanical, no more alive than a jackhammer. Compact, logical, hard, engineered by the forces of evolution, and totally selfish, the viral machinery is dedicated to making copies of itself—which it can do on occasion with radiant speed.

Viruses are not easy to see, even with an electron microscope. Here is a way to imagine the size of a virus. Consider the island of Manhattan, shrunk to this size:

.

This shrunken Manhattan could easily hold nine million common-cold viruses. If you made an aerial reconnaissance of it with an electron microscope, you would see little figures milling like the lunch crowd on Fifth Avenue. Viruses can be purified and concentrated into crystals. Packed in a crystalline layer, shoulder to shoulder and only one virus deep, a hundred million polio viruses could cover the period at the end of this sentence. There could be a thousand Giants Stadiums of viruses sitting on that period—two hundred and fifty Woodstocks of viruses, a third of the population of the United States, sitting on that period—but you wouldn't know it without a scope.

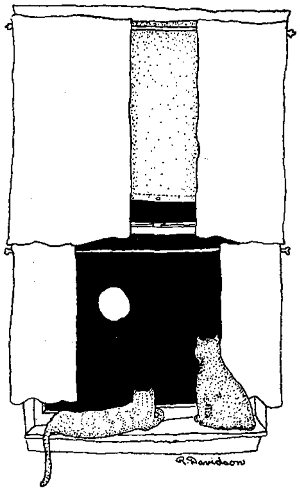
In 1892, a Russian scientist named Dimitry Ivanovsky studied a disease of tobacco leaves which gives them white spots. He passed the juice of sick leaves through extremely fine filters, and when he injected healthy plants with the filtered juice they got sick and developed white spots. Ivanovsky concluded that some very small agent was causing the disease, but he didn't know whether it was a toxic chemical or a living thing. In 1898, Martinus Beijerinck, a Dutch botanist, proved that Ivanovsky's virus was a replicative infectious agent. It has since come to be called tobacco-mosaic virus. In 1900, the United States Army discovered the first human virus—the yellow-fever agent. That was the work of Walter Reed and his team. The Army has tracked viruses from the beginning.

There is no fossil record in rocks to indicate that viruses existed before the late nineteenth century, when tobacco-mosaic virus was first noticed. Fossils of bacteria have turned up in rocks that are more than three billion years old, but no fossils of viruses have ever been found. Nevertheless, viruses are obviously ancient, and perhaps primeval. They are molecular sharks, a motive without a mind. They have sorted themselves into tribes, and they infect everything that lives.

The human immunodeficiency virus, or H.I.V., is a not very infectious but lethal Biosafety Level 2 or 3 agent, which most likely emerged from the rain forests of Central Africa. You don't need to wear a space suit while handling blood infected with H.I.V. During the nineteen-seventies, the virus fell like a shadow over the human population living along the east-west highway that links Kinshasa, in Zaire, with Mombasa, in Kenya. The emergence was subtle: the virus incubates for years in a human host before it kills the host.

A zoonotic virus is a virus that lives naturally in an animal and can infect human cells, perhaps mutating slightly in the course of passage, which enables the virus to start a chain of infection through human hosts. For example, H.I.V.-2 (one of the two major strains of H.I.V.) may be a mutant zoonotic virus that jumped into us from an African monkey known as the sooty mangabey, perhaps when monkey-hunters touched bloody tissue. No one really knows where H.I.V. came from. H.I.V.-1 (the other strain) may have jumped into us from chimpanzees, or it may be a human virus that has been in our species for ages, circulating in some isolated group of people in Central Africa. As outsiders came into the area, AIDS came out, and passed into the general human population.

The emergence of AIDS appears to be a natural consequence of the ruin of the tropical biosphere. Unknown viruses are coming out of the equatorial wildernesses of the earth and discovering the human race. It seems to be happening as a result of the destruction of tropical habitats. You might call AIDS the revenge of the rain forest. AIDS is arguably the worst environmental disaster of the twentieth century, so far. Some of the people who worry in a professional capacity about viruses have begun to wonder whether H.I.V. isn't the only rain-forest virus that will sweep the world. The human immunodeficiency virus looks like an example rather than a culminating disaster. As lethal viruses go, H.I.V. is by no means nature's preëminent display of power. The rain forest, being by far the earth's largest reservoir of both plant and animal species, is also its largest reservoir of viruses, since all living things carry viruses. Just how large the tropical reservoir of viruses is no one knows, but here is one way to consider the question. The earth is estimated to contain between three million and thirty million species of plants and animals. Most of the species are fungi, insects, and non-insect arthropods, such as ticks and mites, and the bulk of them live in tropical forests. Viruses often adapt to one or two species. For example, human beings carry more than a hundred different cold viruses that are adapted almost exclusively to the human host. If we suppose that every species carries one virus exclusively adapted to it, then there may be from three to thirty million strains of viruses. Possibly the number of virus strains is much larger than that—perhaps a hundred million—but nobody has ever tried to count them.



When an ecosystem suffers degradation, many species die out and a few survivor-species have population explosions. Viruses in a damaged ecosystem can come under extreme selective pressure. Viruses are adaptable: they react to change and can mutate fast, and they can jump among species of hosts. As people enter the forest and clear it, viruses come out, carried in their survivor-hosts—rodents, insects, soft ticks—and the viruses meet *Homo sapiens*. Here are the names of some emerging viruses: Lassa. Rift Valley. Oropouche. Rocio. Q fever. V.E.E. Guanarito. Ross River. Monkeypox. Dengue. Chikungunya. Hantaan. Machupo. Junin. The rabies-like strains Mokola and Duvenhage. Le Dantec. Human immunodeficiency virus—which might have been called Kinshasa Highway, if it had been noticed earlier—is considered an emerger, since its penetration of the human race is incomplete and is still happening explosively, with no end in sight. The Kyasanur Forest virus. The Semliki virus. Crimean-Congo. Sindbis. O'nyong-nyong. Marburg. Ebola. Most of them—but not all—come from tropical forests or tropical savannas. When a virus that lives in some nonhuman host is about to crash into the human species, the warning sign may be a spatter of breaks—disconnected emergences, at different times and places. I tend to think of rats leaving a ship. The presence of international airports puts every virus on earth within a day's flying time of the United States.

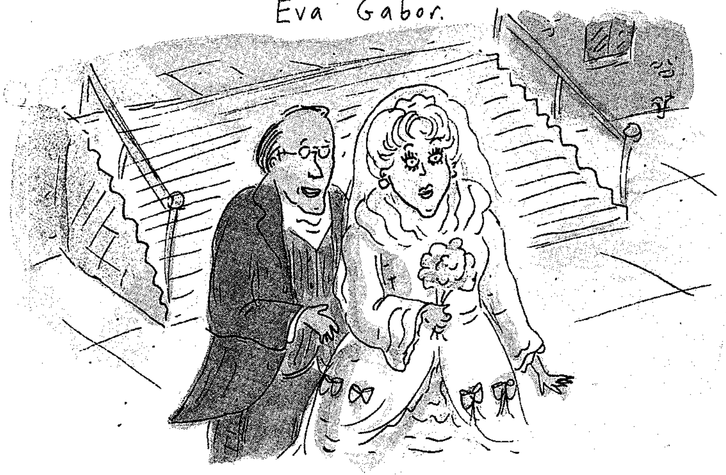
RESTON, VIRGINIA, is near Washington. The town has an active chamber of commerce and a visitors' center designed to lure high-technology businesses to the area. Along the Leesburg Pike, a commuter route that funnels traffic to Washington, you see developments of executive homes. The homes are pseudo-Victorians, with unused porches, and stick-built neo-Georgians, with false-brick fronts and a Baby Benz parked in a semicircular carriageway. You also see the occasional bungalow with cardboard stuffed in a broken window and a Harley in the driveway. The town of Reston is bisected by the Dulles Access and Toll Road, which connects Dulles airport with Washington. Not far from the Dulles Access Road in Reston is a small business park. Until recently, a company called Hazleton Research Products had a monkey house in a one-story building in the business park. It was known as the Reston Primate Quarantine Unit. Hazleton Research Products sells animals for research; it is a division of Corning Incorporated. Hazleton was importing monkeys from the tropics and bringing them through J.F.K. International Airport to the Reston Primate Quarantine Unit. Each year, about sixteen thousand wild monkeys are imported into the United States, to be used as laboratory animals. Federal regulations require that imported monkeys be held in quarantine for at least thirty-one days before they are shipped anywhere else in the United States. This is to prevent the spread of infectious diseases that could kill other primates, including laboratory workers.

Dan Dalgard, doctor of veterinary medicine, is the principal scientist at Hazleton Washington, which has its offices on the Leesburg Pike, in Vienna, next to Reston. Dan Dalgard has an international reputation as a knowledgeable and skilled veterinarian who specializes in primate husbandry, and he understands monkey behavior and monkey diseases. He is a calm, blunt man in his late fifties. He wears glasses, and he has a square, pleasant face. On evenings and weekends, he repairs antique clocks as a hobby. He likes to use his hands and his mind to figure out how a broken complicated system can be fixed. Dalgard sometimes has longings to leave veterinary medicine and immerse himself in clocks.

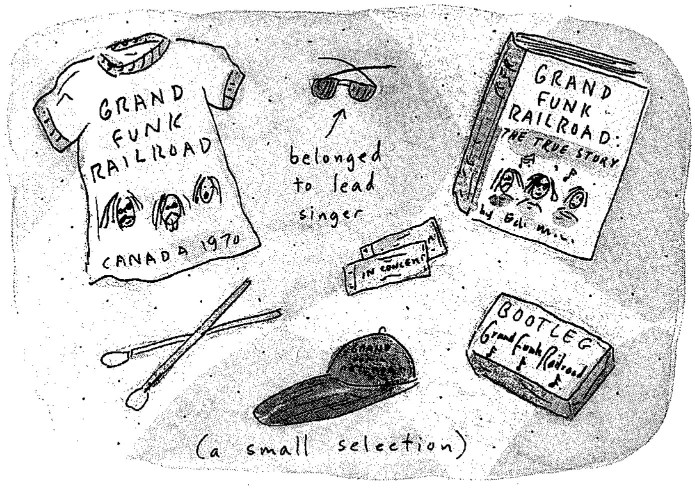
On Wednesday, October 4, 1989, Hazleton accepted a shipment of a hundred wild monkeys from the Philippines. The shipment originated on the island of Mindanao, at a Philippine monkey-export company. The monkeys were macaques, and the species was *Macaca fascicularis*. Zookeepers call it the crab-eating macaque. It is a common monkey that lives along rivers and in mangrove swamps in Southeast Asia, and it is often used as a laboratory animal. It eats fruit, crabs, insects, and small pieces of clay. A crab-eating macaque will snatch a crab out of the water and quickly rip its claws off and throw them away before devouring the rest of the crab. Sometimes a crab-eating macaque isn't quick

LAST-MINUTE BOMBSHELLS

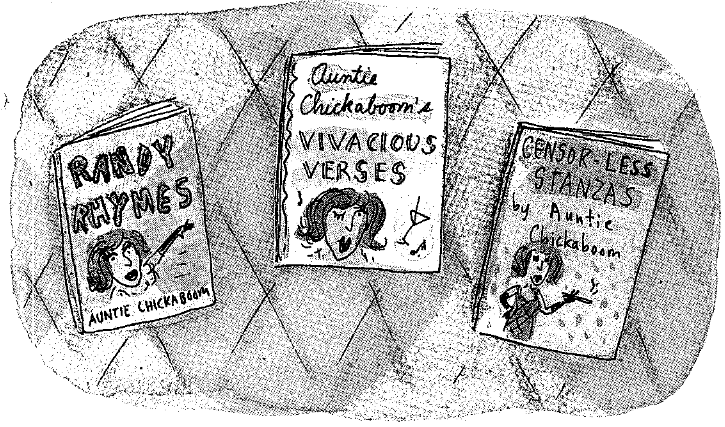
George Bush's annulled marriage to Eva Gabor.



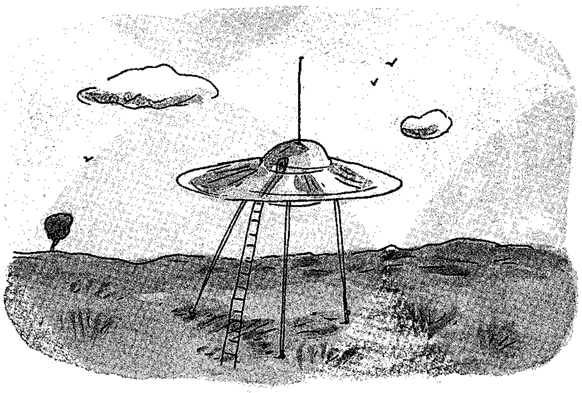
Bill Clinton's phenomenally comprehensive collection of Grand Funk Railroad memorabilia.


GRAND FUNK RAILROAD
CANADA 1970
belonged to lead singer
IN CONCERT
GRAND FUNK RAILROAD: THE TRUE STORY
BOOTLEG Grand Funk Railroad
(a small selection)

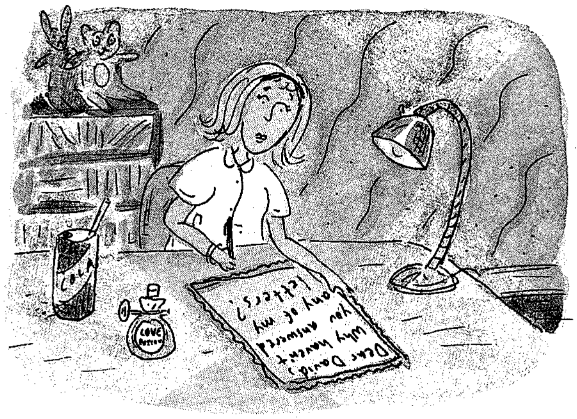
Barbara Bush's books of bawdy limericks published under the pseudonym Auntie Chickaboom.


RANDY RHYMES
AUNTIE CHICKABOOM
Auntie Chickaboom's VIVACIOUS VERSES
CENSOR-LESS STANZAS by Auntie Chickaboom

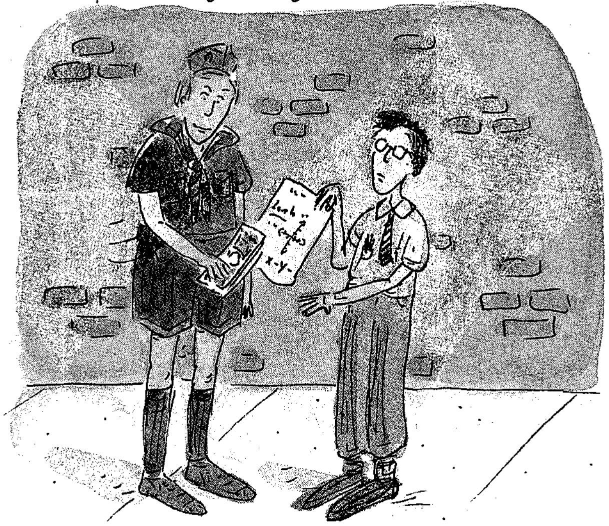
H. Ross Perot's article in "Reader's Digest," August, 1959, about being held hostage aboard a U.F.O.

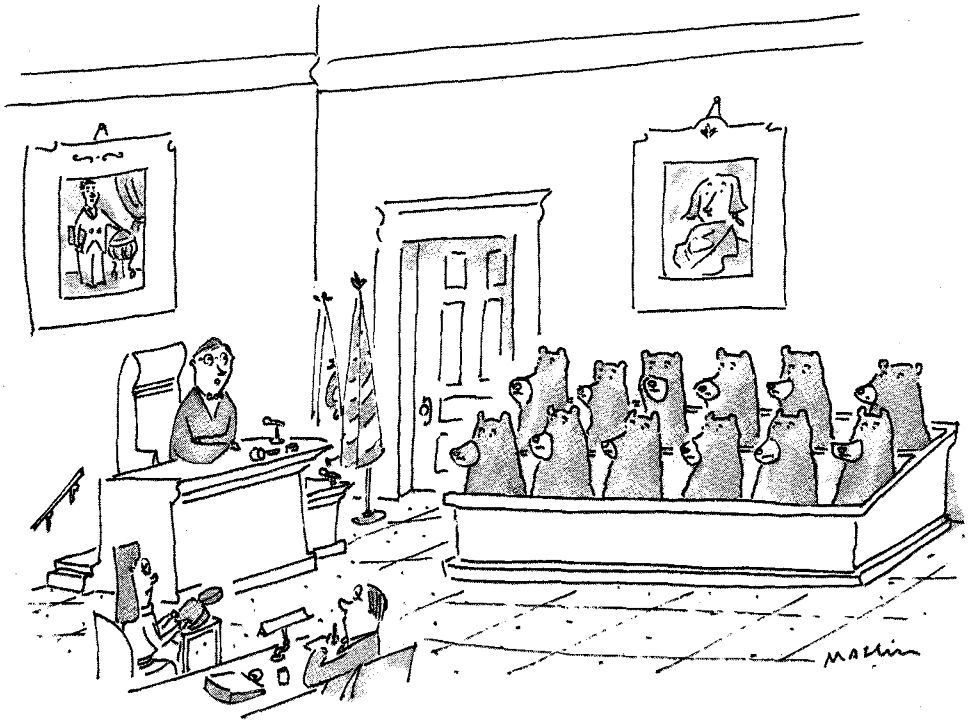


Hillary Clinton's teen-age mash notes to David Eisenhower.


COLA
LOVE POTION
Dear David, Why haven't you answered any of my letters?

Dan Quayle's "arrangement" with Timmy N. regarding math homework.





"As it's coming on winter, I suggest we recess until spring."

• •

enough with the claws, and when the monkeys are on a feeding bout in a mangrove swamp at low tide you can occasionally hear shrieks when a crab fastens on a monkey. The crab-eating macaque has brown eyes, pointed ears, tawny fur, and a long tail. As monkeys go, crab-eating macaques have a calm temperament, provided that you don't stare at them. Any monkey thinks staring is rude, and the crab eater will respond on the same level, screaming "*Kra, kra!*" and hurling its feces at you.

The Philippine monkeys arrived at J.F.K. and were taken by truck to Hazleton's Reston Primate Quarantine Unit. The monkeys were kept in stainless-steel cages in windowless rooms, under artificial lights, and were fed monkey biscuits. The Reston quarantine rooms were designated by letters of the alphabet, from "A" through "L." The Philippine monkeys were put in Room F. The ventilation system recirculated some air in common through the rooms, so that the monkeys were breathing one another's air.

By the first of November, twenty-seven monkeys had died. That was more than usual for a shipment of wild monkeys. Dan Dalgard performed necropsies on the ones that had died, and concluded that they were being killed by dysentery and pneumonia. These diseases are not uncommon in wild monkeys. A week later, on Monday, November 6th, another shipment of crab-eating macaques arrived, making a total of about five hundred monkeys in the quarantine unit, all crab-eating macaques from the Philippines. But by November 10th Dalgard had begun to suspect that some of his monkeys might be dying of simian hemorrhagic fever, or S.H.F., a virus that is lethal to monkeys but does not cause clinical disease in humans. (It infects people but doesn't make them sick.) The possibility worried Dalgard, because S.H.F. is highly contagious in monkeys, and can wipe out a colony.

He began sacrificing monkeys that appeared sick, by injecting them with overdoses of an anesthetic, and then he opened them up. He found that their spleens were enlarged—a classic sign of simian hemorrhagic fever. But monkeys infected with S.H.F. typically die sneezing blood or with other evidence of hemorrhaging, and Dalgard hadn't seen any of these signs in the monkeys that died before November 10th. The monkeys had simply stopped eating and died of shock. The focus of the infection was Room F, where most of the monkeys had perished. The disease gave Dalgard an eerie feeling, and prompted him to keep a diary. Of the monkeys that had died in Room F he wrote:

> Many of the animals were in prime condition and had more abdominal and subcutaneous fat than is customary for animals arriving from the wild. The diagnosis at this time was continuing to point more strongly toward S.H.F. but the slow progression [of the disease] and the lack of the hemorrhagic component confused the diagnosis.

He decided to take the mystery to the United States Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases, where he knew about a virologist named Peter Jahrling, who had done work on S.H.F. He described to Jahrling the illness that was burning through his monkeys, and he sent some blood and tissue samples to Jahrling. Some of the samples came from a monkey known as O53, which had lived in Room F. Jahrling froze some of the tissues and placed them in a Biosafety Level 3 containment room. This level is kept under negative pressure, but you don't need to wear a space suit inside it.

One way to identify a virus is to make it multiply inside living cells in a flask. You drop a very small sample of the virus into the cells, and as the virus spreads through the cells extraordinary numbers of virus particles are produced. You can then look at them under a microscope, or you can put different kinds of fluorescent antibodies—immunity proteins—in the virus culture. These antibodies attach themselves to infected cells and glow under ultraviolet light, and the antibody that makes cells glow tells you which particular virus you have in the flask.

A civilian technician named Joan Rhoderick cultured the unknown monkey virus from the liver of Monkey O53. She ground up a bit of the liver with a mortar and pestle, and dropped some of the resultant mush into flasks that contained a living strain of cells from the kidney of a green monkey. Joan Rhoderick wore a surgical mask and rubber gloves but not a space suit, and she worked with the samples kept in a safety cabinet that pulls air away from the samples and through a filter.

John Rhoderick and Peter Jahrling looked at slices of liver and spleen from Monkey O53, and Jahrling gave a presumptive diagnosis of simian hemorrhagic fever to Dan Dalgard. At this point, Dalgard felt that he had no choice but to sacrifice all the monkeys in Room F in order to halt the spreading disease. If those monkeys were infected with S.H.F., they would die anyway, and if they weren't sacrificed the disease could spread to other rooms, killing more monkeys. Dalgard and an assistant, wearing surgical masks and rubber gloves, euthanized all the monkeys in Room F on November 16th—some seventy monkeys in all. They gave the monkeys injections of an anesthetic. Dalgard opened ten of the corpses to see what he could see, and sent everything to an incinerator.

At the beginning of Thanksgiving week of 1989, when these events were taking place at the Reston Primate Quarantine Unit, Thomas Geisbert was a twenty-seven-year-old civilian researcher working at USAMRIID while he studied for a Ph.D. in microbiology. His specialty is the electron microscope. Geisbert is something of a loner, a tall man with blue eyes, brown hair, and arrestingly large ears. He grew up an only child in western Maryland, where he spent a lot of time camping in the woods alone or with his uncles, who taught him how to hunt and fish. Geisbert's boss at USAMRIID was Peter Jahrling. Tom Geisbert goes deer hunting in West Virginia every year around Thanksgiving. He planned to leave on Monday morning of that week, but something prompted him to stop by his lab at USAMRIID for a last look at the flasks of monkey cells that were incubating the virus from Reston. At nine in the morning, he put on a surgical mask and gloves and entered the BL-3 suite. There he met Joan Rhoderick, the technician who had started the Reston culture. She was looking at a flask under a microscope. The flask contained cells infected with virus from the Reston monkey O53. She said to Geisbert, "There's something flaky going on in this flask."

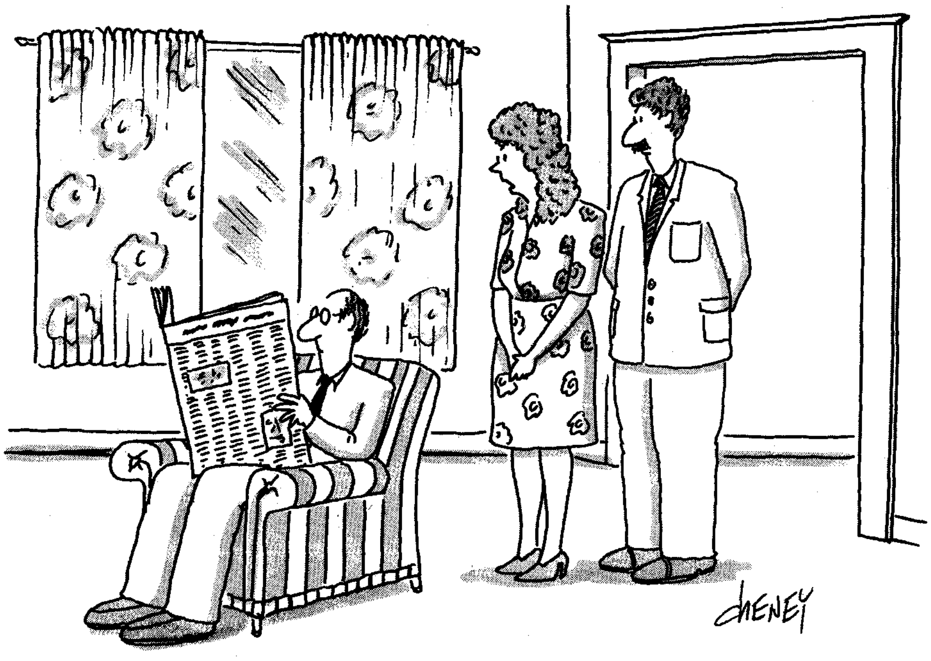
The flask was small—four inches long—and it was made of plastic and had a screw cap. Geisbert looked through the eyepieces of the microscope into the flask. Living cells ordinarily cling to the bottom of a flask in a carpet. This carpet looked eaten by moths. It was full of holes: dead and dying cells had detached from the flask and drifted into the fluid. Later, he described to me what he'd seen. "Cells that have been infected with S.H.F. take on a spiderweb look. These cells didn't look like that. They were rounded and had a granular, pepperlike look. Some were dead. They were 'off the plastic,' as we say. It means they had floated away."

This didn't look like simian hemorrhagic fever. He went out and got Peter Jahrling, his boss. He said to Jahrling, "There's something very strange going on in that flask, but I'm not sure what."

Jahrling had worked at USAMRIID long enough to have seen some strange things in flasks. "The cells were blown away. They were *crud*," Jahrling recalled later. He thought that a wild strain of bacteria had invaded the cell culture. This is a common and annoying occurrence in cell cultures, and it wipes out the culture. Bacteria give off odors as they multiply, and Peter Jahrling had smelled enough bacterial contaminations so that he knew how to distinguish them by nose. Viruses, on the other hand, kill cells without releasing an odor. Jahrling guessed that the flask had been wiped out by a common soil bacterium named pseudomonas, which, he says, "smells like Welch's grape juice." He unscrewed the cap and waved his hand over it, and took a whiff, and said to Geisbert, "Have you ever smelled pseudomonas?" Geisbert accepted the flask from Jahrling and sniffed. He didn't smell any Welch's grape juice. There was no odor. Jahrling, who hadn't smelled anything, either, took back the flask and whiffed it again. Nothing. No smell. But the cells were blown away.

Geisbert poured some milky fluid out of the flask into a test tube and spun it in a microcentrifuge. A small "button" of material collected at the bottom of the test tube—a pill of dead and dying cells. Geisbert removed the button with a wooden stick and soaked it in plastic resin. Then he went hunting in West Virginia. He planned to look at the button in his microscope when he returned, after Thanksgiving. When Ebola virus infects a human being, the incubation period is from seven to fourteen days, while the number of virus particles gradually climbs in the bloodstream. Then comes the headache.

The first known emergence of a filovirus happened in August, 1967, in Marburg, Germany. A shipment of green monkeys from Uganda had arrived in Frankfurt. Green-monkey kidney cells are useful for the production of vaccines, and these monkeys were going to be killed for their kidneys. Most of the monkeys were trucked from Frankfurt to a factory in Marburg that produced serum and vaccines, while a few monkeys from the same shipment stayed in Frankfurt, and a few others went to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. The first person known to be infected with the vi-



"You may go now, Howard. My new husband is here."

rus—the index case—was a man known as Klaus F., an animal-care technician at the serum factory in Marburg. He broke with fever and rash on August 8th, and died two weeks later.

So little is known about the Marburg agent that only one book has been published about it, "Marburg Virus Disease," edited by G. A. Martini and R. Siegert. In it we learn:

> The monkey-keeper HEINRICH P. came back from his holiday on August 13th 1967 and did his job of killing monkeys from August 14th-23rd. The first symptoms appeared on August 21st.
>
> The laboratory assistant RENATE L. broke a test-tube that was to be sterilized, which had contained infected material, on August 28th, and fell ill on September 4th 1967.

And so on. Thirty-one laboratory workers acquired the disease; seven died. In other words, the case-fatality rate of Marburg virus in hospitalized patients was twenty-two per cent. That was terrifying. Yellow fever, which is considered a lethal virus, kills only five per cent of the infected once they reach a hospital.

Marburg began with a splitting headache, focussed behind the eyes and temples. That was followed by a fever. The characteristic diagnostic sign was a red speckled rash over the body which blistered into a sea of tiny white bubbles. "Most of the patients showed a sullen, slightly aggressive, or negativistic behavior," Martini wrote. "Two patients [had] a feeling as if they were lying on crumbs." One became deranged and psychotic. These mental signs were caused by the virus's having damaged the brain. The patient Hans O.-V. showed no signs of mental change, but he suffered a sudden, acute fall of blood pressure and died. At autopsy, his brain was found to be laced with hemorrhages, and there was a massive, fatal hemorrhage at the center. In Frankfurt, an animal attendant known as B. developed a high fever and eventually began bleeding from his mouth, nose, and gastrointestinal tract. He was given whole-blood transfusions, but then he developed uncontrollable hemorrhages at the sites of the I.V. punctures. He died with blood running from his mouth and his nipples. All the survivors lost their hair. During convalescence, the skin peeled off their faces, hands, feet, and genitals. It was a small, frightening emergence.

Marburg virus looks like rope, or it rolls up into the rings that resemble Cheerios. Virologists had never seen a ring-shaped virus, and couldn't figure out how to classify it. They thought that it might be a type of rabies. The rabies particle is shaped like a bullet, and if you stretch a bullet it becomes a rod, and the rod can be bent into a doughnut: Marburg. They started calling Marburg "stretched rabies." But it is not related to rabies.

The question was: What is the virus's natural history? In what animal or insect does Marburg hide? Marburg evidently does not circulate in monkeys. Monkeys die quickly of the disease, and if they were the reservoir, Marburg wouldn't wipe them out. The monkey's immune system would have learned to attack the virus, and the virus itself would have become better adapted to living in monkeys without killing them, since it is in the virus's best interest to let the host survive. The Marburg monkeys had been collected in Uganda by native trappers—apparently in forested habitat to the west of Mt. Elgon, an extinct volcano that straddles the border between Uganda and Kenya. Teams of epidemiologists combed Uganda, and especially the western slopes of Mt. Elgon, looking for some animal or insect that har-

HITCHHIKER

We were driving through the darkness
of some small settlement, a store, a bar,
maybe a silo or warehouse, and
there was a thump. The driver, a salesman
for Travelers Insurance heading for Topeka,
waited a moment and then said, "What was that?"
I, still in my Navy uniform, useful
for hitchhiking, though the war was over
and I was back in college, said, "Uh,
I think you hit a man." I knew he had,
I had seen the round face, with lumpy nose,
of a man about the age of my father
opening in surprise as the right front fender
bounced him toward me, as though he were
going to bash in the windshield, and
giving me a look as he swept by into the darkness.
It felt like a hallucination but it was not.
"Why didn't you say something?" the salesman said,
putting on the brakes. "I thought you saw him,"
I said. In fact, I didn't know why, but suddenly
I knew I would have been capable of sitting
next to this man who had just run over somebody
all the way to Topeka without mentioning it.
He opened the door on his side and looked back.
I did the same on my side. Back there in the light
of a street light we saw the body by the road,
with a man bending over it. For a moment
it was myself bending in a time to come
over the body of my father. The man stood up
and shouted, "Forget it, he gets hit all the time!"
Oh. A bum. We were happy to forget it.
We closed the car doors and drove away.
The rest of the way, into dawn in Kansas,
when he dropped me off without visible regret,
we said not a word, except, as I got out,
I said, "Thanks," and he said, "Don't mention it."

—GALWAY KINNELL

This is a test of the Emergency Cartoon System.
Shanahan
Had this been an actual emergency, you would have been instructed to turn to the Goings On About Town section and await further developments.

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bored Marburg virus; they found nothing.

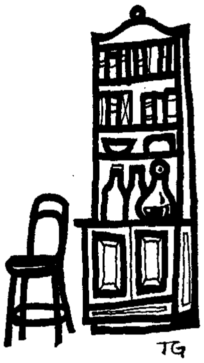
In 1980, a French engineer who was employed by the Nzoia Sugar Company at a factory in Kenya within sight of Mt. Elgon developed Marburg and died. He was an amateur naturalist who spent time camping and hiking around Mt. Elgon, and he had recently visited a cavern on the Kenyan side of the mountain which was known as Kitum Cave. It wasn't clear where the Frenchman had picked up the virus, whether at the sugar factory or outdoors. Then, in the late summer of 1987, a Danish boy whose name will be given here as Peter Cardinal visited the Kenyan side of Mt. Elgon with his parents—the Cardinals were tourists—and the boy broke with Marburg and died.

Epidemiologists at USAMRIID became interested in the cases, and they traced the movements of the French engineer and the Danish boy in the days before their illnesses and deaths. The result was weird. The paths of the French engineer and the Danish boy had crossed only once—in Kitum Cave. Peter Cardinal had gone inside Kitum Cave. As for the Ugandan trappers who had collected the original Marburg monkeys, they might have poached them from the Kenyan side of Mt. Elgon. Those monkeys might have lived near Kitum Cave, and might even have occasionally visited the cave.

Mt. Elgon is a huge, eroded volcanic massif, fifty miles across—one of the largest volcanoes in East Africa. Kitum Cave is one of a number of caverns that penetrate Mt. Elgon at an altitude of around eight thousand feet and open their mouths in a deep forest of podo trees, African junipers, African olives, and camphors. Kitum Cave descends into tight passages and underground pools that extend an unknown distance back into Mt. Elgon. The volcanic rock within Kitum Cave is permeated with mineral salts. Elephants go inside the cave to root out chunks of salty rock with their tusks and chew on them. Water buffalo also visit the cave to lick the rocks, and they may be followed into the cave by leopards. Fruit bats and insect-eating bats roost in the cave, filling the air with a sour smell. The animals drop their dung in the cave—an enclosed airspace—and they attract biting flies and carry ticks and mites. The volcanic rock contains petrified logs, the remains of trees that were enveloped in lava, and the logs are filled with sharp crystals. Peter Cardinal may have handled crystals inside the cave and scratched his hands. Possibly the crystals were tainted with animal urine or the remains of an insect. The Army keeps some of Peter Cardinal's tissues frozen in cryovials, and the Cardinal strain is viciously hot. It kills guinea pigs like flies. In February, 1988, a few months after Peter Cardinal died, the Army sent a team of epidemiologists to Kitum Cave.

The team wore Racal suits inside the cave. A Racal is a lightweight pressurized suit with a filtered air supply, used for hot operations in the field. There is no vaccine for Marburg, and the Army people had come to believe that the virus could be spread through the air. Near and inside the cave they set out, in cages, guinea pigs and primates—baboons, green monkeys, and Sykes' monkeys—and they surrounded the cages with electrified wire to discourage predators. The guinea pigs and monkeys were sentinel animals, like canaries in a coal mine: they were placed there in the theory or the hope that some of them would develop Marburg. With the help of Kenyan naturalists, the Army team trapped as many different kinds of wild mammals as they could find, including rodents, rock hyraxes, and bats, and drew blood from them. They collected insects. Some local people, the il-Kony, had lived in some of the caves. A Kenyan doctor from the Kenya Medical Research Institute, in Nairobi, drew blood from these people and took their medical histories. At the far end of Kitum Cave, where it disappears in pools of water, the Army team found a population of sand flies. They mashed some flies and tested them for Marburg.

The expedition was a dry hole. The sentinel animals remained healthy, and the blood and tissue samples from the mammals, insects, arthropods, and local people showed no obvious signs of Marburg. To this day, the natural reservoir of Marburg is unknown. Marburg lives somewhere in the shadow of Mt. Elgon.



On July 6, 1976, five hundred miles northwest of Mt. Elgon, in the township of Nzara, Sudan, in densely wooded country at the edge of the African rain forest, a man referred to as YuG died of a hemorrhagic fever. He was a storekeeper in a cotton factory, and he was the index case of a new strain of filovirus. The clinical features of the disease were indistinguishable from those of Marburg—masklike facial expression, rash, bleeding, terminal shock. Two of YuG's co-workers also came down with the disease and died. No one knows how the virus got into the cotton factory. One of the dead men, a man known as PG, had a wide circle of friends and contacts, and he also had several mistresses. Most of the subsequent fatal cases of what later came to be known as the Sudan subtype of Ebola hemorrhagic fever can be traced back through chains of infection to PG, through as many as six generations of infection. The strain burned through the town of Nzara, and then reached eastward to the town of Maridi, where there was a large hospital, and it hit the hospital like a bomb. It killed nurses and aides, and it savaged patients and then radiated outward from the hospital through patients' families. (A characteristic of a lethal, highly transmissible, and incurable virus is that it kills medical people first. Frequently, as in this case, the medical-care system actually intensifies the outbreak, like a lens that focusses sunlight in a heap of tinder.) The Sudan virus was more than twice as lethal as Marburg—its case-fatality rate was fifty per cent, the same as that of bubonic plague before antibiotics. And the death rate kept climbing, until by the third month of the Sudan outbreak mortality among the infected had hit seventy per cent, as if perhaps the virus were mutating, getting hotter as it passed from generation to generation in humans. Then, for reasons that aren't clear, the outbreak subsided. The surviving staff of the Maridi hospital had panicked and run away, and that may have helped break the chain of infection. Or possibly the human hosts died too quickly to be efficient transmitters of the virus. Whatever the reason, the organism vanished.

In early September, 1976, two months after the beginning of the Sudan break, a similar yet more lethal strain emerged five hundred miles to the west, in the Bumba Zone of Zaire, an area of humid rain forest drained by the Ebola River. The Ebola River strain seemed to come out of nowhere, and popped up in the Yambuku Mission Hospital, an upcountry clinic run by Belgian nuns. The nuns and staff at Yambuku were using five needles a day to give injections of antibiotics and vitamins to hundreds of people in the hospital's outpatient and maternity clinics. The staff sometimes rinsed the needles in a pan of warm water between injections. The virus entered the cycle of dirty needles, and erupted in fifty-five villages around the hospital. It first killed people who had received injections, and then killed family members—particularly women, who in Africa prepare the dead for burial.

The virus also wiped out the Yambuku hospital's medical staff. (Medical people go first.) By the end of September, two-thirds of the staff were dead or dying, and the hospital closed down. A critically ill Belgian nun who was a nurse at the hospital, Sister M.E., was flown to Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire, with another nun, Sister E.R., who nursed her. Sister M.E. was admitted to the Ngaliema Hospital, and she died there shortly afterward. Sister E.R. then became ill and died. Then a Zairian nurse at Ngaliema Hospital, identified as M.N., developed fever and bleeding. She had cared for Sister M.E.; she herself would soon die. While M.N. was incubating the virus, she had had face-to-face contact with several dozen people in the city of Kinshasa. The virus seemed about to start an explosive chain of lethal transmission in Kinshasa, a poor, crowded city with a population of two million, where the virus might go off like a bonfire. This epidemiological possibility triggered a panic in European capitals. Kinshasa has direct air links to Europe, and European governments contemplated blocking flights from Kinshasa. The World Health Organization feared that the nurse M.N. might be the vector for a worldwide pandemic. The Zairian government ordered its army to seal off the Bumba Zone with roadblocks, and all radio contact with the province was lost. Bumba had dropped off the earth, into the silent heart of darkness.

Out of Bumba came some tubes of blood, and from Sudan came some vials of serum. A few of the samples ended up in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Centers for Disease Control, where a team headed by Karl M. Johnson isolated the Ebola River virus for the first time. Key members of the team were Frederick A. Murphy, who is an expert in the electron microscope, and Patricia A. Webb, a virologist. (She was married to Karl Johnson at the time.) The team started to grow the virus in cultures of monkey cells, and Murphy began looking at the cells in his microscope. On October 13th, Webb telephoned her husband, Johnson, and said to him, "Karl, you'd better come quick to the lab. Fred has harvested some cells, and they've got *worms*." The virus looked like Marburg, but Johnson found that it didn't react to Marburg antibodies. Therefore it was a new virus. Karl Johnson and his team had performed what is known as the first isolation and characterization of the agent—they had got it to replicate, and they had proved it was something new. (Teams at the Microbiological Research Establishment in Porton Down, England, and at the Institute for Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium, had isolated the virus, too, but they didn't know what it was.) Johnson's team had earned the right to name the organism. They named it Ebola.

I learned that Johnson could be reached at a fax number in Big Sky, Montana, so I sent him a fax, in which I said that Ebola virus fascinated me. My fax machine emitted this reply:

MR. PRESTON:
Unless you include the feeling generated by gazing into the eyes of a waving confrontational cobra, "fascination" is not what I feel about Ebola. How about shit scared?

Victoria Roberts

"I'm not a Democrat, but I am a cat person."

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THE richest trout river in America may be the Bighorn, a green, muscular river in Montana that flows out of the Bighorn Mountains into grassland, and is lined with cottonwoods. One recent day in October, the brown trout were spawning in the Bighorn, and the cottonwoods had turned yellow and rattled in a south wind. Standing waist-deep in a mutable slick of the river, wearing sunglasses, with a cigarette hanging from the corner of his mouth and a fly rod in his hand, Karl Johnson ripped his line off the water and laid a cast upstream. Johnson is a great figure in the history of virology; he trained an entire generation of field virologists at a tropical laboratory called MARU, which he ran in Panama. "I'm so *glad* nature is not benign," he said. He studied the water, took a step downstream, and whipped another cast. "But on a day like today, we can pretend nature is benign—all monsters and beasts have their benign moments." Johnson was a member of a World Health Organization team that went to Kinshasa to try to contain the Ebola virus. "When we got to Kinshasa, the place was an absolute madhouse. There was no news coming out of Bumba province, no radio contact. We knew it was bad in there, and we knew we were dealing with something new. We didn't know if the virus could be spread by droplets in the air, somewhat like influenza. If Ebola *had* easily spread through the air, the world would be a very different place today."

"How so?"

"There would be a lot fewer of us. It would have been *exceedingly* difficult to contain that virus if it had had any major respiratory component."

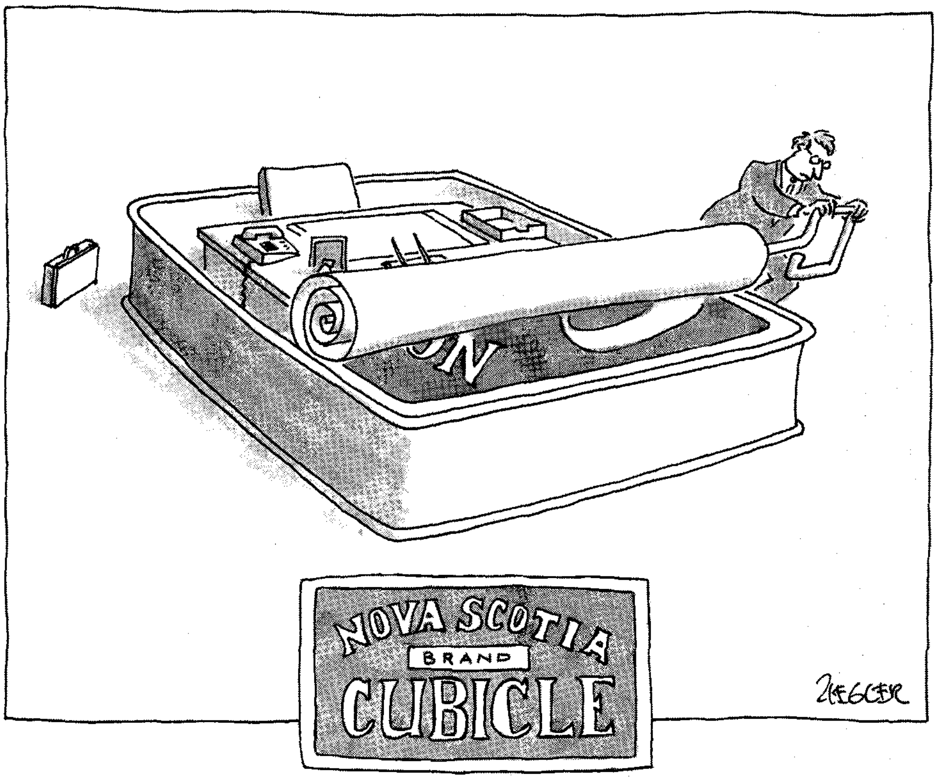
"Were you afraid you wouldn't come out alive?"

"Yeah. But I'd been there before. In 1963, I led the investigation of the Machupo outbreak, named for a river that runs by a little town in the plains of eastern Bolivia. Same kind of thing. People bleeding and dying."

Karl Johnson performed the first isolation of the Machupo virus, a deadly emerger that belongs to a family known as the arenaviruses, because the virus particles are speckled with dots that look like sand. (*Arena* is Latin for "sand.") Johnson came down with Machupo in Bolivia—he went into borderline shock in a hospital in the Canal Zone, after he'd been flown out of Bolivia, and he nearly died. Johnson also collaborated on the first isolation of the Hantaan virus, a lethal east-Asian organism (classified as a BL-3 agent), which happens to be another important emerger. A Hantaan relative now infects the rats of Baltimore and Philadelphia; no obvious human epidemic has yet occurred in the United States. Johnson has therefore been credited with work that led to the discovery and classification of three major groups of emerging human hemorrhagic-fever viruses—the filoviruses, the arenaviruses, and the hantaviruses (named after Hantaan).

"I've seen young physicians run from these hemorrhagic viruses, literally," he said. "In the Zaire thing, we had a young doctor from the C.D.C. who just couldn't get on the plane with me to Kinshasa. He admitted he was too afraid. We sent him home. I did figure that if Ebola was the Andromeda strain—incredibly lethal and spread by droplet infection—then there wasn't going to be any safe place in the world anyway. It was better to be working at the epicenter than to get the infection at the London opera."

The W.H.O. team in Zaire wore fabric helmets with full-face respirators, and disposable gowns, gloves, and overshoes. They set up two containment pavilions at Ngaliema Hospital. Into one pavilion they shut thirty-seven people who had had face-to-face contact with M.N., the Zairian nurse who was then dying, and into the other pavilion they shut all medical staff who had had con-



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tact with the nuns who had already died. Doctors and nurses entered the containment areas through a double-doored antechamber, a gray zone. They wrapped the cadavers of the nuns and the nurse (when she died) in sheets soaked in a phenolic disinfectant, then double-bagged these mummies in plastic, put them in coffins that had screw-down lids, and issued instructions to the families of the deceased to bury the coffins immediately, with no wake. The rooms where the nuns had suffered their agonals were not pleasant to behold. The floors, furniture, and walls were stained with blood. The aspect of those rooms may have raised in some minds one or two questions about the nature of the Supreme Being; or, for persons not inclined to theology, the blood on the walls may have served as a reminder of the nature of Nature. The team washed everything with bleach and smoked the victims' rooms with formaldehyde vapor. No one in the containment pavilions or in the city fell ill with the virus. Somewhat to the team's surprise, and to its great relief, the Ebola agent seemed not to be contagious in face-to-face contacts.

"We got an advance party into the bush with a couple of Land Rovers," Johnson said. "They wore respirators and paper gowns and rubber gloves. It turned out that the epidemic was already in decline when the teams got there. The village elders had had the wisdom to institute procedures for dealing with smallpox, which has been a problem for centuries in Africa. An infected person was put in a hut by himself, and food and water were pushed through the doorway. If the person was able to care for himself, he'd eventually come out of the hut. Otherwise, they'd burn the hut down. It really worked with Ebola. But think what that does to a traditional culture. In order to stop an epidemic that way, you have to suspend all the normal cultural relations that surround death. You have to put a parent or a child into that hut and burn it down afterward. The African technique would *work* in the United States, but I don't think we'd do it."

During Thanksgiving week of 1989, Nancy Jaax's father was dying of cancer in Wichita, Kansas, and she and Jerry drove home. Nancy had grown up on a farm in Wichita. Her father had owned a small chain of hamburger restaurants called Dunn's Grills. They lived on a farm outside town, where they grew truck crops, such as tomatoes, cantaloupes, peppers, watermelons, and corn, for the restaurants. Nancy would get up at five in the morning to work in the fields with her father. Later, in high school, she moved in with her grandmother in Wichita, and in the evenings she would help run another restaurant owned by her father called the Plantation (her father had sold Dunn's Grills). Thanksgiving of 1989 was the most painful family reunion of her life. She said her farewell to her father. She didn't know whether she would see him again.

Tom Geisbert shot a buck in West Virginia, and returned home to spend Thanksgiving with his family. Dan Dalgard spent an uneasy Thanksgiving with his wife. He had not stopped the apparent course of simian hemorrhagic fever in his monkeys by sacrificing the monkeys in Room F. Dead monkeys appeared in Room H, two doors down the hall from Room F. After the holiday weekend, Dalgard performed necropsies on four monkeys, taking slices of spleen, liver, and kidney. He wrote in his diary, "Gut feeling after looking at the animals and tissues is that we are not seeing lesions compatible with S.H.F." He had no idea what was killing his monkeys.

At seven-thirty on Monday morning, November 27th, Tom Geisbert reported to work at his laboratory at USAMRIID. He wanted to get an early start with his electron microscope, looking at the button of dead cells he had harvested the previous Monday. Recently, I met with Geisbert in his office. The walls were plastered with photographs of the Ebola virus. Some of the viruses were ten inches long and resembled ballpark frankfurters. I asked him how he takes a photograph of a virus. He unlocked a filing cabinet and removed from it a metal object the size of a pocket pencil sharpener. "This is a diamond knife," he said. "These things cost about four grand apiece. See the diamond?" Hesitantly, he slid his treasure across his desk toward me, and I picked it up. A prism gleamed. "Please don't touch the edge," he said. "You'll completely trash it. You'll dull it, and your finger oils will stick to the edge. Four thousand dollars."

He showed me a button of cells. It was a dot the size of a toast crumb, embedded in a wedge of clear plastic. The cells—from a monkey's liver—were almost rotten with Ebola virus, but he'd sterilized the button with chemicals. He took the button into another room, where he mounted the button and the diamond knife in a machine and threw a switch. The machine worked like a deli slicer. It drew the diamond knife across the button, peeling off a slice, just like a slice of luncheon meat. The slice was this size:

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It contained as many as ten thousand cells. Geisbert picked up the slice with a tiny copper mesh, and carried the sample into a darkened room containing a metal tower taller than a person. That was his microscope. He put the sample in a chamber in the microscope, and pushed a button. A complicated image appeared on a viewing screen, showing a tiny corner of one cell—a cellscape of oxbow rivers and lakes that reminded me of an aerial view of jungle.

"I don't see any Ebola here," Geisbert declared, turning a knob, while the cellscape drifted across the field of view. We huddled over the viewing screen, and lakes and paths and specks went by almost without end, until I felt as if we were inside a starship, making a low-orbit pass over a huge, unexplored planet near Tau Ceti. "Sometimes the viruses are everywhere, or sometimes I have to look for six hours before I find a particle," Geisbert said. He was immutably patient, his eyes scanning the terrain. He could pick out patterns of sickness in a cell, subtle anomalies which, like footprints, would lead him to the horrible brood. In the case of Ebola, it is a brood. When Ebola replicates, the virus grows in blocks inside a cell, which are like nests. These are the inclusion bodies, or bricks. The bricks migrate toward the surface of the cell. As a brick reaches the cell wall, it disintegrates into hundreds of individual viruses, and the broodlings bud through the cell membrane and float away in the universe of the host. No one knows how the Ebola bricks are propelled toward the surface of the cell.

"That was quite a day," Geisbert said, sitting at the microscope in the darkened room. His face glowed in the light of the screen. "It's in the morning, around ten o'clock. The sample is cell culture from Monkey O53. I put the sample in the scope. I switch it on. I've looked at it for maybe fifteen seconds, and then—'Oh, *shit*.' The tissue was a mess, and it was *wall-to-wall* with filovirus." Some areas were so thick with virus that they looked like buckets of rope. "I almost lost it," he said. "The only filovirus I'd ever seen in the microscope was Marburg. I had worked with the Cardinal strain of Marburg—the strain from the Danish boy who got Marburg at Kitum Cave in Mt. Elgon—and I knew what that looked like. So I thought, Marburg. I knew that Pete Jahrling and I had sniffed those flasks. I thought, Oh, man, Pete and I have been handling this stuff in BL-3 conditions, and this is a BL-4 agent."

He developed a few photographs of the virus particles and hurried into the office of Peter Jahrling, his boss. Jahrling reacted calmly. It seemed to be a filovirus—Jahrling could see wormlike shapes. Jahrling and Geisbert could have breathed it into their lungs. They began counting days back to the time of their exposure. Seven days had passed since they inhaled from the flask. Well, they didn't have headaches yet.

Jahrling went to get his boss, Colonel Clarence James Peters—he goes by the name C.J.—who was then the chief of the disease-assessment division at USAMRIID. Colonel Peters came into Jahrling's office and looked at Geisbert's photographs. Peters feared that any public announcement of a Marburg-virus outbreak might cause a panic in Reston, once people had learned the history of Marburg. He wanted to get a definite positive identification of the strain before the Army made any announcement.

Tom Geisbert stayed up most of that night. He went into the BL-3 laboratory and found a plastic jug that contained sterilized pieces of liver from Monkey O53. He fished some liver out of the jug, clipped bits off it, and fixed the bits in plastic, preparatory to slicing them for viewing in his electron microscope. He left the plastic to cure and went home for a couple of hours to try to sleep. He returned to Fort Detrick while it was still dark, at five in the morning, and before the sun rose he had developed photographs of filovirus particles budding directly out of cells in the monkey's liver. It was a definite confirmation that the Reston monkeys were infected with a filovirus. But what strain was it? Everyone assumed that it was Marburg, which kills about one in four people it infects. All that day, in his laboratory, Peter Jahrling used a fluorescence test to try to nail down the strain. At five o'clock in the evening, he put some samples under an ultraviolet light and, to his shock, found that the stuff that glowed wasn't Marburg: it was Ebola, the slate-wiper, which kills almost nine out of ten people.

The news that Ebola virus had broken out near Washington, D.C., was not received casually at Fort Detrick. Shortly after five o'clock, minutes after Jahrling typed the strain, Colonel Peters notified the chain of command. First, Peters and Jahrling went to Colonel David Huxsoll, the head of USAMRIID. Picking up Huxsoll and then Nancy Jaax, the group then went to Major General Philip Russell, the commander of the Army Medical Research & Development Command at Fort Detrick. General Russell was himself a virologist, and when he saw Geisbert's glossy photographs he knew what he was looking at. The meeting became tumultuous. With people talking loudly in the background, General Russell picked up the telephone and called the Centers for Disease Control, and got Frederick Murphy on the line. Murphy is an expert on the Ebola virus—he had performed the first isolation of the virus with Karl Johnson, during the 1976 Zaire outbreak—and now, perhaps understandably, Murphy was skeptical when General Russell told him that the Army had isolated Ebola near Washington. Murphy is reported to have said to General Russell, "You can't fool me. You have crud in your scope." Still, Murphy took it seriously. He said that a team from the C.D.C. would fly to USAMRIID early the next morning to review the data. He advised Russell to notify Hazleton Research Products, so that the company's employees could be protected, and also to notify the Virginia State Department of Health.

Russell and Huxsoll put C.J. Peters in charge of any Army units that would be needed to deal with the Ebola outbreak. Next, Peters set up a conference call with Dan Dalgard, at his home. He told Dalgard that his monkeys had Ebola virus, probably in a mixed infection with simian hemorrhagic fever. Dalgard had heard of Marburg but never of Ebola.

THE next morning—Wednesday, November 29th—seven dead monkeys turned up in Room H at the Reston Primate Quarantine Unit. It seemed that Room H had now become the hot spot.

Then Dalgard got another disturbing piece of news. An animal caretaker at the Reston monkey unit, who will here be called Jarvis Purdy, had suffered a heart attack and had been taken to Loudoun Hospital, near Reston. Dalgard wondered if Purdy's heart attack had been triggered by an Ebola infection. Had Purdy thrown an Ebola clot? Dalgard called the hospital and, without mentioning the word "Ebola," left instructions for Purdy's doctor that if he saw any unusual signs in Purdy he should immediately notify Colonel C. J. Peters, of the United States Army. Dalgard also issued an order to the monkey caretakers at the Reston unit. As he recorded in his journal,

> All operations other than feeding, observation and cleaning were to be suspended. Anyone entering the rooms was to have full protection—Tyvek suit, respirator, and gloves. Dead animals were to be double-bagged and placed in a refrigerator.

That morning, Colonel Peters and Lieutenant Colonel Nancy Jaax drove down to Hazleton Washington's headquarters, in Vienna, where Dalgard has his office and the company has a laboratory. Peters, in command of the Army groups that would respond to the Reston emergence in whatever way might be needed, sensed that the Army might have to act decisively to deal with the virus. As he drove to Vienna, he turned over in his mind the question of whether the Army would have to sterilize the Reston Primate Quarantine Unit, using military biohazard teams. There is a slang term in the Army for this type of action: the term is "nuke." In the world of biocontainment, nuke has nothing to do with nuclear weapons. It has to do with neutralizing hot organisms: to nuke a place means to sterilize it. You go into the place in space suits and you isolate any infected hosts. If the hosts are animals, you kill them, bag them, and incinerate them. If the hosts are human, you put them in bubble stretchers and take them to the biocontainment hospital at USAMRIID—the Slammer. Then you sterilize the hot zone with biocides and formaldehyde gas.

C.J. Peters is not a hardboiled military type. He is a medical doctor and a field virologist of the old school, a jungle hand who got his training with Karl Johnson in Panama and worked with him during the Machupo outbreak in Bolivia. Peters has recently left the Army to become the chief of the Special Pathogens Branch of the Centers for Disease Control—a job that he landed at least partly because of the way he handled the Reston emergence. Peters is a chunky, affable man in his fifties, with a mustache, a round face, and what I think of as stingingly alert eyes.

"I think I can get you off with a lighter sentence, but it might screw up your movie deal."

Not wanting to attract attention, Peters and Lieutenant Colonel Jaax drove in separate civilian cars to the corporate office of Hazleton Washington. They were in uniform. At Hazleton, they talked with Dalgard and looked at slides of monkey tissue. They wanted to get samples, and perhaps some cadavers, and they wanted to see the monkeys at the monkey house face-to-face. Dalgard, perhaps fearful of losing control of the situation, would not allow them to visit the Reston Primate Quarantine Unit. Instead, the two Army officers drove four miles down the Leesburg Pike into Reston and parked in a cul-de-sac beside an Amoco station, near some pay telephones, waiting for someone from the Reston monkey house to bring them samples of monkey tissue. It was early afternoon. "We watched guys buying Cokes to drink, and housewives calling their boyfriends," Peters said to me. Eventually a windowless Hazleton van pulled up and parked beside the colonels, and a Hazleton employee swung heavily out of the driver's seat. "I've got 'em right back here," he said. He threw open the door of the van, and the colonels saw seven garbage bags.

"I said to myself, 'What *is* this?' " Peters recalled. The garbage bags held seven dead monkeys, and they were as *hot as hell. Presumably lethal.* They were the seven crab-eating macaques that had turned up dead that morning in Room H.

Jaax was getting that *oogh* feeling in the pit of her stomach. She turned to Peters. "I'm not putting that shit in the trunk of this car," she said. "As a veterinarian, I have certain responsibilities with regard to transportation of dead animals, sir. I can't just knowingly ship a dead animal with an infectious disease across state lines. You're a doc. You can get away with this." She nodded at his shoulder bars and said, "This is why you put on those big eagles, sir."

Nancy Jaax wanted to dissect the monkeys as soon as possible, since she had noticed how Ebola-infected cadavers degenerate. ("If the animal has been dead for more than twenty-four hours, you have a bag of soup to look at.") Peters inspected the bags—it was a relief to see that the monkeys were triple-bagged, anyway—and he decided to take them to Fort Detrick and worry about health laws afterward. "If the guy drove them back to Reston, I felt there would be a certain added risk to the population just from his driving them around in the van, and there would also be a delay in diagnosing them," he said to me. "We felt that if we could quickly get a definite diagnosis of Ebola it would be in everyone's favor." They loaded the bags into the trunk of Peters' car, a red Toyota. The monkeys depressed the rear end of his car. Peters didn't see anything dripping. Nancy Jaax followed him to Fort Detrick.

When she arrived, she immediately suited up. First, she went into a locker room and put on a long-sleeved scrub suit and tucked her hair into a surgical cap. She put on a pair of white socks. Then she walked across the floor in her socks and waved a magnetic swipe-card across an entry sensor. A central computer at USAMRIID noted that Jaax, Nancy, was attempting entry into Containment Suite AA-5. Finding that she was cleared to enter the area, the computer beeped and unlocked the door. She went through the door into a negative-pressure Biosafety Level 3 staging area, the route into BL-4, the hot zone. There were two other pathologists in the staging area, and they and Nancy Jaax would work as buddies in the hot zone. She put on her inner surgical gloves and sealed them to the sleeves of her scrub suit with bands of sticky tape. Now she had one intact barrier between her and Nature. Her space suit was hanging on a peg, under ultraviolet lights. It was bright blue and was made of plastic. It had a soft plastic helmet with a clear faceplate. The suit had soft feet, like the feet in a bunny suit, and, attached at the wrists, rubber gloves. She stepped into the suit, fitted her hands into the gloves, and pulled the helmet over her head. She closed a steel zipper, followed by a Ziploc-type zipper. Her breath clouded the faceplate. Peering through condensation, she opened a supply air lock. Sitting in the air lock were the seven bagged monkeys. She picked up a couple of the bags and a box of necropsy tools, opened a door marked with a red toadshade, and stepped into the gray-zone air lock leading to Biosafety Level 4. In this air lock was a chemical shower. She opened the far door and walked into Biosafety Level 4, the hot zone. As she closed the air lock behind her, she pulled a chain, and the air lock began a decon cycle: an Envirochem shower ran in the chamber. That was to stop any backflow of organisms from the hot zone through the air lock.

From the ceiling of the hot room dangled an array of yellow air hoses. Jaax plugged a hose into her suit, and dry air cleared her faceplate. It made a loud rushing noise. People in BL-4 can hardly hear each other shout, and they often communicate by hand signals, like scuba divers. When you were in BL-4, even with a buddy, you were essentially alone. Jaax thought that it was like going into outer space.

She opened a stainless-steel-lined closet which was flooded with ultraviolet light, and removed a pair of rubber boots and pulled them on. She collected her necropsy tools and specimen containers and laid them beside a stainless-steel table. She untied a bag, and laid a crab-eating macaque on the table. Unclouded brown eyes stared at her. Some animal behaviorists think that monkeys are an alien consciousness unto themselves, where human rules don't necessarily apply, and others think that monkeys' minds and emotions work much like ours, since we are all primates. She slit the monkey's abdomen with a scalpel, and then disposed of the scalpel in a sharps container. From this point on, she would use scissors. Scalpels are deadly instruments in a BL-4 hot suite. If you were to cut yourself with a hot scalpel, your boss would be filling out accident reports while you sat in the Slammer for the rest of your life—which might not be long.

The spleen was enlarged, but there were no obvious lesions inside this monkey. Then, at the base of the stomach, she found a ring of hemorrhages on the junction between the stomach and the small intestine—a lesion that is associated with simian hemorrhagic fever. She clipped samples of tissue and pressed them on glass slides. The slides were the only glass objects allowed in the hot zone. All laboratory beakers were plastic. A sliver of glass might pierce the suit and you, bringing into your bloodstream the replicative other. She worked slowly, rinsing her gloves often in Clorox. She was alone in a cocoon with the sound of her air.

WHILE Nancy Jaax was in the hot room, a big meeting occurred in a conference room at USAMRIID. The meeting turned into a power struggle, between the Centers for Disease Control and the Army, over which institution would manage the Reston outbreak. Representing the C.D.C. were Dr. Joseph McCormick, who was then the chief of the Special Pathogens Branch at the C.D.C., and Dr. Frederick Murphy, who had first isolated Ebola. McCormick spoke for the C.D.C., and, according to the impression the USAMRIID people got, he said to them, in effect: Thanks for alerting us. The big boys are here now. You can turn this over to us. After all, the C.D.C. has a mandate for protecting the American population from infectious disease.

Colonel Peters resisted a takeover by the C.D.C. He and McCormick personally disliked each other, and the clash of personalities rapidly became institutional head-butting between the C.D.C. and the Army. At its heart, the argument concerned turf between doctors. Peters said to McCormick that the Army had appropriate containment suites for handling the organism and good tests that would reveal its presence in tissue. McCormick claimed that the C.D.C. had a better, newer technique for testing for Ebola. Peters replied that an ongoing epidemic is not the time to try to field-test a new technique. Peters added that USAMRIID was closer to the outbreak than the C.D.C. Peters hardly needed to add that those seven dead monkeys, even as he spoke, were being dissected in a hot suite: possession is nine-tenths of the law, and the Army had the meat. The participants agreed, finally, that the C.D.C. would manage the human-health aspects of the Ebola outbreak, while the Army would deal with the monkeys in Reston.

The next day, Peters walked into the

office of Colonel Jerry Jaax, Nancy Jaax's husband, and put him in charge of the group that would go to Reston. Jerry Jaax, in turn, called a meeting of military people and civilians at USAMRIID, and asked for volunteers to terminate the monkeys in Room H, take clinical samples, and sterilize the room. It was going to be a limited operation. They would leave the rest of the monkey house alone.

At five-thirty in the morning on Friday, December 1st, an Army biohazard group—all volunteers, mixed civilians and soldiers (including both officers and enlisted people), led by Jerry Jaax—assembled in a parking lot next to USAMRIID. Everyone wore civilian clothes, and they drove their own cars, to avoid attracting attention. They had filled three unmarked vans with equipment. The vans contained, among other things, Racal suits—the same type of lightweight suit that the Army team had used inside Kitum Cave. The group moved out, soon got stuck in rush-hour traffic, and didn't arrive at the business park where the monkey house was situated until eight-thirty. They drove across a lawn and assembled in a secluded spot behind the monkey house, along a fringe of woods. The back side of the building presented a brick face, some narrow windows, and a glass door. The door was the insertion point.

It was a freezing, overcast day. From where they stood, they could see through the trees a day-care center with a playground, and they could hear shouts of children in the air. The operation would be carried out near children. Jerry Jaax had named Major Mark Haines, a veterinarian, the operational leader of the space-suited teams working inside the building. Haines, a Green Beret, had trained in the Green Berets' scuba-diving school. Haines' experience in underwater operations would prove helpful. A battery pack attached to each suit powered a blower that kept the suit pressurized with filtered air. The batteries had a life span of six hours, and people would have to be extracted from the hot area and decontaminated before their batteries failed, or they would be in trouble. Major Haines told the group that he wanted everyone to use the buddy system. Stick with your buddy and watch your buddy's suit for rips or holes, he told them. Two of the group members were dating each other: they worked separately, following Army policy. Almost none of the teams' members, including Haines and Jerry Jaax, had ever worn a Racal suit.

Nancy Jaax knew something about space suits, and she spoke to some of the team members. "Your suits are under pressure," she said. "If you get a rip in your suit, you have to tape it shut right away, or you'll lose your pressure, and contaminated air could flow inside the suit." She held up a roll of brown sticky tape. "I wrap extra tape around my ankle, like this"—she demonstrated—"and then you can tear off a length of tape and use it to patch a hole in your suit. Be exquisitely careful. Know where your hands and body are at all times. If you get blood on your suit, stop and clean it off. Keep your gloves clean. With bloody gloves, you can't see a hole in the glove."

Suiting up proved to be difficult and embarrassing. You had to remove all your clothes, including your underwear, and then put on a surgical scrub suit. The teams rigged up a changing room inside one of the vans, screening it with sheets of plastic, but the women felt exposed. It was also bitterly cold. After you had put on your scrub suit, you went in through the insertion-point door to a staging area, and a support team there helped you put on your Racal suit.

The staging area led into a hallway deeper in the monkey house. They used this hallway as a makeshift air lock, or gray zone. It had doors at either end. One door led out to the staging area; the other door led into the monkey rooms. At no time were both doors to be opened simultaneously. The first two people to put on their suits and enter the air lock were Colonel Jerry Jaax and Major Mark Haines. They stood in the air lock for a moment, and then opened the door and entered the monkey area. Something had gone wrong with the heating system, and the temperature had soared above ninety in there. Jaax and Haines began to pour sweat—the Racal suits weren't insulated—and their plastic head bubbles fogged up. The monkeys were subdued and hungry. Jaax and Haines walked up and down the hallways, going into each monkey room and checking the cages for dead or sick monkeys. They fed the monkeys their monkey biscuits. The monkeys hooted with excitement every time Jaax got near a biscuit bin. They found some chairs in a lounge and carried them into a hallway,

DIVORCED, VISITATION EVERY WEEKEND
ELLEN HARRIS
SINGLE MOM
RICHARD COX
PEGGY WEBB
JOINT CUSTODY
ANDY AND CHARLOTTE KOTOP
BLENDED FAMILY
DAVE AND KIM HART
WORKING ON THE ISSUES
KOREN

"I wonder what that cost him?"

where the volunteers could sit and rest while they sorted tubes of blood and loaded syringes with drugs. Jaax wanted to be sure that no one would reach inside a cage with a hypodermic syringe and get bitten by a monkey infected with Ebola. He had devised a mop handle with a U-shaped attachment on the end that would pin a monkey down in its cage. Then someone could stick the monkey with a syringe on the end of a pole.

Each insertion of a pair of buddies took twenty minutes. As the pairs were coming in, Jaax and Haines loaded some syringes with double doses of ketamine, an anesthetic. Then they went into Room H, the focus of the outbreak, and ran the mop handle into one cage after another, sticking each nervous animal with the pole syringe, and reloaded the pole with a full syringe after each injection. The monkeys began to collapse in their cages. When a monkey was down, Jaax injected the animal with a sedative, Rompun, which put it in a deep sleep.

The bleed teams set up bleed tables in a hallway, outside the view of any monkeys. (Monkeys get upset when they see euthanasia going on.) Haines would put an unconscious monkey on a bleed table, stick a needle in its thigh, and draw samples of blood. He would pass the monkey to Major Nathaniel Powell, Jr., a veterinarian, at a euthanasia table. Powell would lay the monkey out and give it an injection of T-61, a euthanasia agent, which killed the monkey. When the monkey's breathing and heart had stopped, Powell would hand the monkey to Major Stephen Denny. He would open the monkey with scissors, snip out bits of spleen and liver, and put the samples in tubes. The other soldiers and the civilians put the monkeys in plastic biohazard bags, adding paper towels or kitty litter to soak up blood. They triple-bagged each monkey, washing the outside of each bag with Clorox, and then they loaded the bags into drums called hatboxes, which look like ice-cream containers but are blazed with biohazard symbols.

People grew tired and overheated in their suits, and some needed to go to the bathroom. As the day wore on, they began coming out in pairs through the air lock. A gray team, also wearing Racal suits, stood in the air lock between the two worlds and sprayed each person's suit with Clorox. Then the person went into the staging area, where the support team peeled off the suit, and the person climbed into the van and stripped to the skin, a shivering tropical primate. The men and women put on their clothes and stood around on the grass, looking pale, weak, and thoughtful. By nightfall, all the monkeys in Room H had been put to death.

THAT weekend, Dan Dalgard caught up on his diary. "Retirement as a clock repairman looks better each day," he wrote. He worried that television crews would show up on Monday morning, and he ordered the Hazleton animal caretakers, who were still entering the Reston monkey unit to feed the surviving monkeys but were now wearing respirators and overalls, not to go outside the building with their protective equipment on. He did not want images of Hazleton monkey workers wearing what looked like gas masks to appear on the evening news.

He arrived at the monkey unit early on Monday morning, and was parking his car when he saw a Hazleton animal caretaker, who will here be called Francis Milton, standing out on the lawn by the main entrance wearing his respirator and suit. Dalgard was furious. He jumped out of his car. Suddenly, Milton pulled off his respirator, knelt in the grass, and vomited. Dalgard was "scared shitless," he told me later. Milton developed the dry heaves. Dalgard helped him to his feet, took him indoors, and had him lie down on a couch. They couldn't find a thermometer. Someone ran to a drugstore and bought one. Milton had a fever of a hundred and one. He was shaky and felt faint. He appeared to be breaking with Ebola. He did not seem afraid; he told people that he had been previously saved, and had put his life in the hands of Our Lord. They called an ambulance. Just as it showed up, so did television crews. The ambulance, chased by television vans, took Milton to

Fairfax Hospital, where he was put into an isolation ward.

Dalgard now had two employees in the hospital—Purdy with a heart attack and Milton with a fever—and either of them could be breaking with Ebola. He decided that he must order the destruction of all the monkeys. The time had come to evacuate the building and turn it over to the Army. He called Colonel Peters at Fort Detrick. Peters asked Dalgard to send him a letter ceding control of the building to the Army. Dalgard sent it immediately by fax. Peters showed it to General Russell. Peters saw a need for clarity and speed. "You reach a point where you need to make a decision," Peters explained to me. Dalgard, in his letter, had asked the Army to assume responsibility for any liability that would arise after the Army took over. Peters refused to assume liability. Dalgard backed down; they signed the letter; Dalgard evacuated and locked the building; a Hazleton courier drove the keys to Fort Detrick; and the building fell under the control of the Army.

The next day—Tuesday—the biohazard teams returned, with their unmarked vans, and deployed in the grassy area behind the building. The teams began to suit up. Before they went inside, Major Haines, the Green Beret, gave them a talk. By his later account, his words went this way: "You are going to euthanize a whole building full of animals. This is not a fun operation. You must consider these animals as beings of a kind. Don't go in and play with the monkeys. I don't want to hear laughing and joking around the animals. I can be hard. Remember the veterinarian's creed: You have a responsibility to animals and you have a responsibility to science. These animals gave their lives to science. They were caught up in this thing; it's not their fault; they had nothing to do with it. Go in by twos. Never hand a used needle to another person. If a needle comes out of its cap, it goes straight into an animal, and then don't recap it, because you could stick yourself. Put the used syringe straight into a disposal container. If you get tired, tell your supervisor, and we'll decon you out."

It took three days to kill all the monkeys, and the teams did it room by room. The most dangerous job fell to Jerry Jaax. That was to inject conscious monkeys with the first anesthetic, and not get bitten. A sergeant named Thomas Amen stayed at Jaax's side during most of the operation. He and Jaax took turns pinning the monkeys with the mop handle and giving them injections with the pole syringe. The lowest banks of cages were at floor level and were often dark. Jaax, who is a tall man, had to get down on his knees to peer inside them. He could hardly see anything through his head bubble. He would pick out the shape of a monkey in the back of a cage, pin it down, and then Sergeant Amen would ease the pole syringe into the cage, aiming for the thigh. There would be screeches and a wild commotion, the monkey shrieking "*Kra, kra!*" Jaax's knees hurt and he could hardly stand up after a day of injecting monkeys. He was one of the last to be deconned out at the end of each day, and Mark Haines remarked later that when Jerry Jaax took off his Racal suit he looked ten years older.

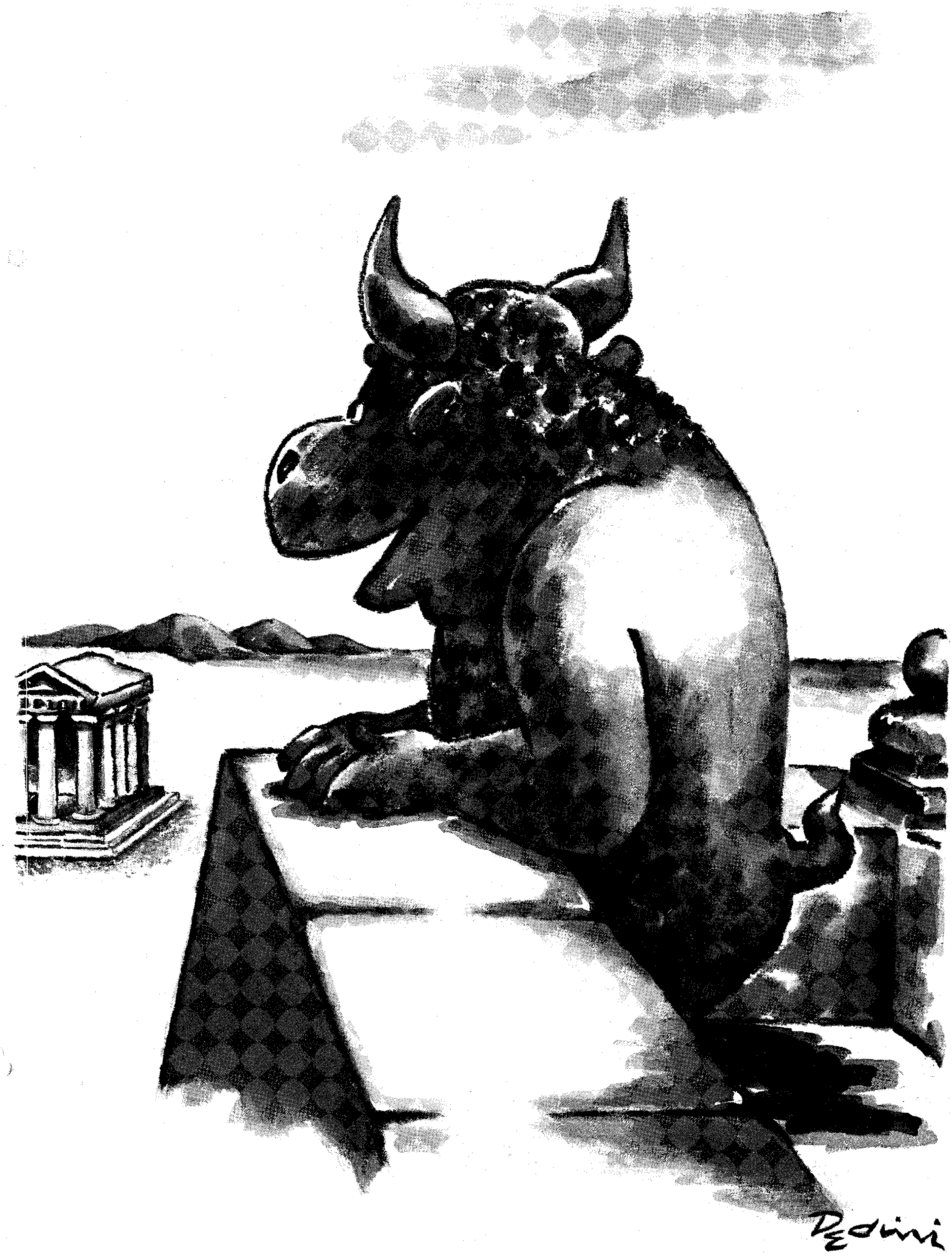
At Fort Detrick, Nancy Jaax stayed up late every night, dissecting monkeys and preserving their tissues. Nancy and Jerry didn't speak much about the job to their children—a son and a daughter, who were both in middle school. The children hardly saw their parents during the emergency. On December 7th, Nancy's father died, in Wichita. Jerry urged her to go home for the funeral. She flew home alone, reflecting that she had not been there to hold her father's hand.

Inside the Reston monkey facility, the bleed team set up a table in an empty monkey room, where there was a water faucet and a floor drain. The constant sampling of monkey blood and tissues generated much blood; they washed it down the drain with Clorox. As the nuking went on, by the second and third days you could see exhausted soldiers and civilians in suits, men and women, their head bubbles clouded with condensation, sitting in the chairs in the main hallway, loading syringes with T-61 and sorting boxes full of blood tubes. Some talked loudly, to be heard over the whine of their blowers, and others just stared at the walls.

WHEN the monkeys were dead, the teams cleared out, and locked the building. They had collected a total of thirty-five hundred clinical samples, but nobody had stuck himself with a needle or received a bite. Then the decon team arrived. The rooms and halls were bloodstained and strewn with medical packaging, monkey biscuits, and monkey feces. Every object and surface had to be presumed lethally hot. The decon team wore Racal suits and worked slowly. They washed the walls with Clorox bleach. They bagged the medical debris, and washed feces out of corners with bleach and shoveled it into bags. The bagged monkeys were delivered to Dalgard's people, to be burned at a Hazleton incinerator. Using silver duct tape, the decon teams taped all the doors and windows shut and taped sheets of plastic over vent openings, first inside the building and then outside, until they had made the building airtight.

Finally, on December 18th, the decon team set out patches of paper saturated with spores of a harmless bacterium known as *Bacillus subtilis niger*, scattering them all around the monkey house. These spores are hard to kill. It is believed that a decon job that kills *niger* will kill anything. The team had brought thirty-nine Sunbeam electric frying pans. Sunbeam frying pans are the Army's tool of choice for a decon job. They plugged the frying pans into heavy-duty electrical outlets all around the monkey building, which were wired to a master switch. Into each Sunbeam they dropped a handful of paraformaldehyde crystals. They dialled the pans to "high." At 18:00 hours on December 18th, someone threw the master switch, and the Sunbeams began to cook, releasing formaldehyde gas. The building's doors, windows, and vents, having been taped, prevented the gas from escaping. Three days later, the decon team, again wearing Racal suits, went back inside the building and collected the spore samples. The Sunbeam treatment had killed the *niger*. Total, unequivocal sterilization of a room is difficult to achieve and nearly impossible to verify, but a Sunbeam cookout that exterminates *niger* implies success. The building had been nuked. For a short while, the Reston Primate Quarantine Unit was probably the only building in the world where nothing lived, nothing at all.

TOM GEISBERT and Peter Jahrling, who had breathed Ebola Reston virus from a flask, worked around the clock for weeks, testing monkey blood



"My wish is simple—to give something back to the community."

and tissues. As the days went by and they did not develop headaches, their worry subsided. They were encouraged by the fact that Dan Dalgard had not developed Ebola-virus infection. He had been dissecting hot monkeys weeks before the Army found Ebola in them, and he was fine. In the end, neither Geisbert nor Jahrling came down with Ebola, and neither showed immunological signs of having been exposed to the virus. As for Francis Milton, the Hazleton animal caretaker who had vomited on the lawn, he recovered quickly. It seemed that Milton had had influenza—or, possibly, an extremely mild case of Ebola Reston. Later, Milton developed antibodies to Ebola Reston. That means he had become infected with the strain. The virus had multiplied inside him, but he had not developed clinical disease, except, perhaps, nausea and fever—if, indeed, his illness came from Ebola rather than flu. Milton did not give Ebola to anyone else. As for Purdy, the animal caretaker who had had a heart attack, he recovered normally.

YOU PRUNE YOUR LIST IN SUMMER

Where I am the sky has been trying
to clear all morning.
At noon the sea is sparking
green, a giant coin flipped and

falling, and there are warnings:
a plane towing an ad for cigarettes
(pleasures are dangerous),
the sun's fuzzy mouth sucking the day back

in through the haze.
I am in search of the perfect stone
for you—as if it would help!
What good are stones to you

now, rose or black,
pointed, smooth;
why remind you, why be
heavy in your hand.

Where you are—
the truth is I don't know
where you are.
Maybe the city:

lunch date with a noisy woman,
rainstorm, the umbrella forgotten.
And more phone messages!
All afternoon you prune your list,

and I can see you crossing us off,
peeling back layers, working
down to the ribbed, worn
pit of your self, then

setting out, tons lighter,
like the prow of a boat without
its boat behind, and ladyless
in front: no more breasts to the wind,

no more long, carved hair.
Don't worry. Already (it's weeks)
I lie in bed mourning your loss,
already I remember this summer

like a summer gone, and myself
like a woman who rented here years ago—
her radio and sunscreen, her stack
of paperbacks. It was she

paddling the warm wave of getting away,
she slender, on a diet from love,
who was free. Free!
Best self, lost sister, I start

to forget her, wondering
if at the edge of your day
my colors don't still go up,
a small disturbance, a tat of flag

nicking the morning at the edge of your view.

—Deborah Garrison

After the decon team left, Hazleton Research Products took the building back. In January, 1990, the company restocked the building with monkeys, which it had bought from the same Philippine exporter that supplied the earlier batches of sick monkeys. A few weeks after the restocking, Ebola Reston virus mixed with simian hemorrhagic fever again broke out in the monkey building. It seemed that the Ebola Reston virus had been circulating at the Philippine exporter's compound in Mindanao.

This time, Dan Dalgard did not turn the Reston monkey house over to the Army, but he did let the Army take samples back to USAMRIID. Since no human illness had resulted from the first outbreak, Dalgard decided to try to contain the disease room by room. When disease broke out in a room, he sacrificed all the monkeys in that room. But the virus began appearing in room after room, accompanied by respiratory signs, such as coughing, bloody sputum, and hemorrhagic pneumonia, and by March most of the monkeys were dead. Hazleton was renting the building from a commercial landlord. Not surprisingly, relations between Hazleton and the landlord did not improve during the Army nuking and the second outbreak of Ebola. Hazleton vacated the building after the second outbreak, and to this day it stands empty.

PERHAPS the most surprising fact about the Reston emergence is that it has not resulted in any obvious human illness or death. There was, however, a subtle and perhaps sinister effect. Six Hazleton employees had close contact with the sick monkeys, including Dan Dalgard. Of those six men, four—all but Dalgard and a supervisor—developed antibodies to the virus in their bloodstream. That means that the virus replicated successfully in the four men's tissues. One of the four, a man who will here be called John Coleus, cut his finger with a scalpel while performing a necropsy on a monkey that had died of Ebola Reston. It happened during the second outbreak, in February, 1990. "We were frankly fearful that he had bought the farm," Peter Jahrling said to me. But John Coleus didn't even get sick. Why John Coleus didn't die of Ebola is one of the great mysteries of the Reston outbreak. He was certainly infected with Ebola—the virus had multiplied in him—yet he showed no ill effects. As for the three other men who caught Ebola Reston, it seems that they must have picked up the virus through the air. They were using water hoses to clean the cages, and they may have breathed droplets of monkey waste or monkey mucus into their lungs. To date, none of the four men have shown any clinical symptoms of illness. Ebola Reston virus infects human beings but apparently doesn't make them sick—or possibly it gives them a flu-like illness. Yet it appears to be absolutely deadly to monkeys.

Ebola Reston virus is an extremely close relative of Ebola Zaire, the hot strain. It may be that Ebola Reston is a variant of Ebola Zaire; perhaps a mutation rendered it harmless to human beings. It may be that Ebola Reston is a Southeast Asian cousin of Ebola Zaire. Epidemiologists visited the Philippine monkey-export facility in Mindanao and found that none of the employees there had suffered a serious unknown illness in the year preceding the Reston emergence. Ebola Reston and Ebola Zaire look the same in an electron microscope. A molecular biologist at the C.D.C. named Anthony Sanchez has begun to analyze the Ebola virus's genetic sequences. He has found that Ebola Reston is, genetically, very close to Ebola Zaire. "I term them kissing cousins," he said to me. "But I can't put my finger on why Reston is apparently apathogenic in human beings and doesn't make us sick."

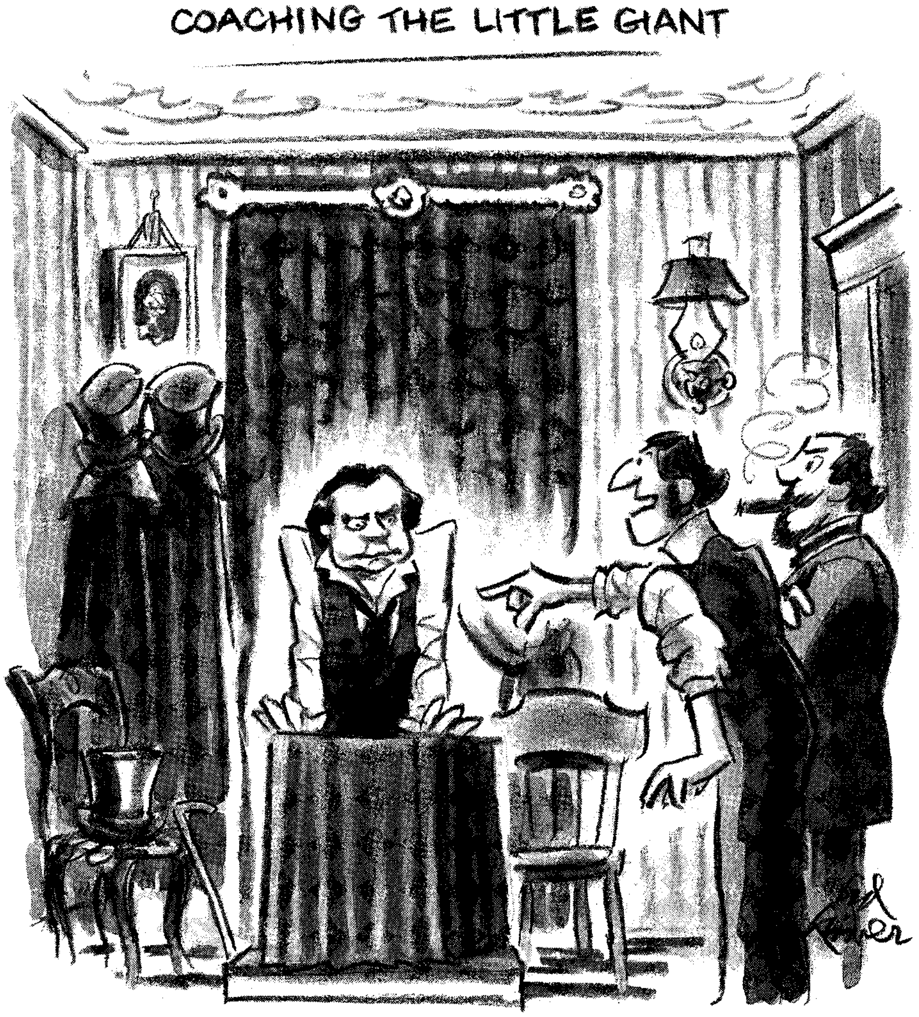
In March, 1990, right after the second Reston outbreak, the C.D.C. slapped a heavy set of restrictions on monkey importers, tightening the testing and quarantine procedures. The C.D.C. also temporarily revoked the licenses of three companies—Hazleton Research Products, the Charles River Primates Corporation, and Worldwide Primates—charging those companies with violating quarantine rules. The C.D.C.'s actions effectively stopped the importation of monkeys into the United States for several months. The total loss to Hazleton ran into the millions of dollars. Monkeys are worth money. Crab-eating macaques fetched around five hundred dollars apiece before the Reston outbreak; since then, government regulations and a monkey shortage have driven the price to fifteen hundred dollars. Despite the C.D.C.'s action against Hazleton, scientists at USAMRIID, and even some at the C.D.C., give Dalgard and his company high praise for making the decision to hand the monkey facility over to the Army, which cost the company millions but seemed essential for the safety of the American population. "It was hard for Hazleton, but they did the right thing," Peter Jahrling said to me.

Jahrling, an inhaler of Ebola who lived to tell about it, is now the acting chief of virology at USAMRIID. He is also credited, along with Tom Geisbert, with having performed the first laboratory isolation and characterization of the Ebola Reston strain. This recognition gives Jahrling the right to name it; he hasn't decided on a name. One day, in his office, he showed me a photograph of some Ebola virus particles. They looked as if they had been cooked al dente and would make a tempting first course at a trattoria in Rome. "Look at this honker. Look at this long sucker here," Jahrling said, his finger tracing a spaghetto. "It's Res— Oh, I was about to say it's Reston, but it isn't. It's Zaire. The point is, you can't easily tell the difference between them by looking. It brings you back to a philosophical question: Why is the Zaire stuff hot? Why isn't Reston hot, when they're so close to each other? The Ebola Reston virus is almost certainly transmitted by some airborne route. Those Hazleton workers who developed antibodies to the virus—I'm pretty sure they got the virus through the air."

"Did we dodge a bullet?" I asked.

"I don't think we did," he said. "The bullet hit us. We were just lucky that the bullet we took was a rubber bullet from a .22 rather than a dumdum bullet from a .45. My concern is that people are saying, 'Whew, we dodged a bullet.' And the next time they see Ebola in a microscope they'll say, 'Aw, it's just Reston,' and they'll take it outside a containment facility. And we'll get whacked in the forehead when the stuff turns out *not* to be Reston but its big brother."

KARL JOHNSON, the leader of the team that isolated and named the Ebola virus, is sitting in a swale of dry



"O.K. Now, if he comes at you with 'A house divided against itself cannot stand,' what's your reply?"

grass on the bank of the Bighorn River. Something screams on the opposite bank. "Hear that pheasant? That's what I like about the Bighorn," he says. He peers across the water, where insects are hatching from the river's surface. "Huh! We've got two different emergences going on here."

I look carefully and see two swarms of insects coming off the water. One type of insect is flying upstream, into the wind; the other type is being blown downstream. The clouds are passing through each other, two interpenetrative rivers of insects flowing above the river of water. "The ones that are flying upstream are little tiny mayflies called tricos," Johnson says. "The others are the baetises. They have really long tails. These insects spend a year or more at the bottom of the river as nymphs. Then they pupate and rapidly emerge from the water and fly away as adults. The adults molt into spinners, which is the egg-laying form, and the spinners lay their eggs on the surface of the river and die. The process from emergence to dying can happen fast—the whole thing might take a couple of hours. These hatchers are like emerging viruses. The viruses have been on the earth a long, long time. Invisible. In the river, you might say." Johnson tells me that the word "emerge" comes from the Latin word *emergere*. In Webster's unabridged dictionary, its first meaning is: "To rise from . . . an enveloping fluid." He says, "It means to come through another medium. Most of the emerging viruses are being transmitted to man from animals. Coming through another medium. There's been this incredible damned surge of people on our planet. There's been a human population explosion and a human invasion of tropical habitats. There are just too many people entering too many ecosystems and violating them. People stumble into something and get sick."

Johnson stands up and knots to his line a tiny fly that looks like a dead spinner, a canapé for a trout. Bufflehead ducks are diving at the head of the pool, and a trout rises and flops, transmitting rings into the water that spread and die, absorbed in the filiations of the Bighorn.

"Do you find viruses beautiful?"

"Oh, yeah," he says softly. "Looking at Ebola under an electron microscope is like looking at a gorgeously wrought ice castle. The thing is so cold. So totally pure. In Bolivia, we found out that the reservoir of the Machupo virus is a wild mouse. Machupo is fundamentally a sexually transmitted infection in a mouse. These Bolivian mice live in demes, which are like villages. They copulate frequently. When the mouse population expands to the point where there is contact among the demes, you have a sexually transmitted plague of Machupo in the mice, and the population crashes. The Machupo virus is a force that keeps the mouse population from going out of control and using up its food supply. Machupo *benefits* the mouse as a species, because when the demes touch, the population gets thinned out. This is Nature. And I happen to think it is one of the loveliest biological structures I've ever seen."

"It sounds like AIDS," I say.

"You're damned right. AIDS is that way for us. As a biologist, from a deeply philosophical viewpoint, I don't think there's any difference. As a physician, of course, I can't turn my back on another human being."

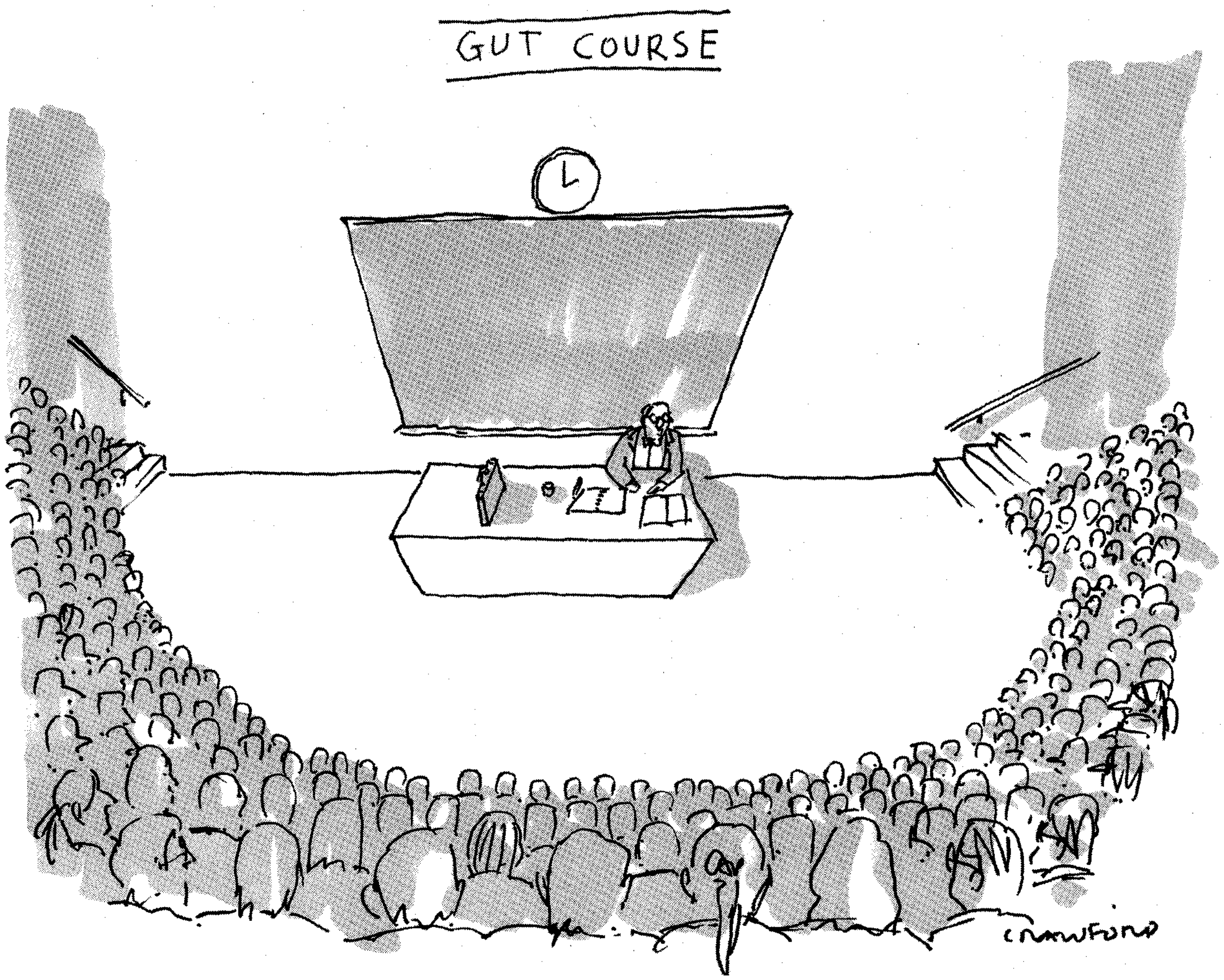
THIS past week in Washington, the Institute of Medicine, which is chartered by the National Academy of Sciences, called a news conference and released a frightening report entitled "Emerging Infections." The report was two years in the making. Under the heading "Trouble Ahead," the report described the Reston emergence as a classic example of "the potential of foreign disease agents to enter the United States." The Reston emergence scared a lot of epidemiologists.

The Institute of Medicine report essentially warns us to stay tuned. It says that not only emerging viruses but also mutant bacteria, such as the strains that cause multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, and protozoans, such as mutant strains of malaria, have become major and growing threats to the American population. The report says, "We can also be confident that new diseases will emerge, although it is impossible to predict their individual emergence in time and place." The Institute of Medicine finds that there has been a general breakdown in the public health system in the United States. We lack the forces to deal with a monster, at the very time when a monster could appear—especially given the emergence of H.I.V.

In its two years of deliberation, the committee came up with some recommendations: We need to have a national and worldwide surveillance system to identify emergences as they happen. (If we had had such a system in place fifteen years ago, we might have seen AIDS hatching off the river, as it were, perhaps in Central Africa, and we might have been able to save thousands of American lives.) We need a modernized and strengthened vaccine program, which would include a "surge" capacity for vaccine development, to respond to an emergency. We need better preventive medicine, to keep people from spreading emergent infectious diseases. And we need to train more field epidemiologists, since they are the detectives who help us find and know our enemies.

One of the authors of the Institute of Medicine report is a virologist named Stephen Morse. In the course of writing this account, I dropped in on him several times at Rockefeller University, in Manhattan. Morse is a voluble, bearded figure, who inhabits a paper-jammed lair on a hallway that reeks of urine from rabbits and mice. (Viruses need to grow in cells.) One day an unpleasant thought crossed my mind, and I asked Morse if an emerging virus could wipe out our species.

"Isn't H.I.V. enough?" he asked. He said that H.I.V. might actually do the job. There has been some debate, recently, about whether H.I.V. could mutate into an airborne disease, like influenza. Then AIDS would suddenly become AIDS-flu. It would circle the globe in a flash. The case mortality in AIDS seems to be close to a hundred per cent. "The H.I.V. particle does get into the lung," Morse explained to me. "There is no reason *in principle* why H.I.V. couldn't spread by the respiratory route. Many viruses that are closely related to H.I.V., such as the Visna virus, which is a fatal immune-deficiency virus of sheep, do spread through a cough. The sheep cough, and the virus is aerosolized. Indeed, primary H.I.V. infection—when you first get infected—has been associated with a flu-like illness, with upper respiratory system



"This afternoon, we'll be turning our attention to Guess jeans."

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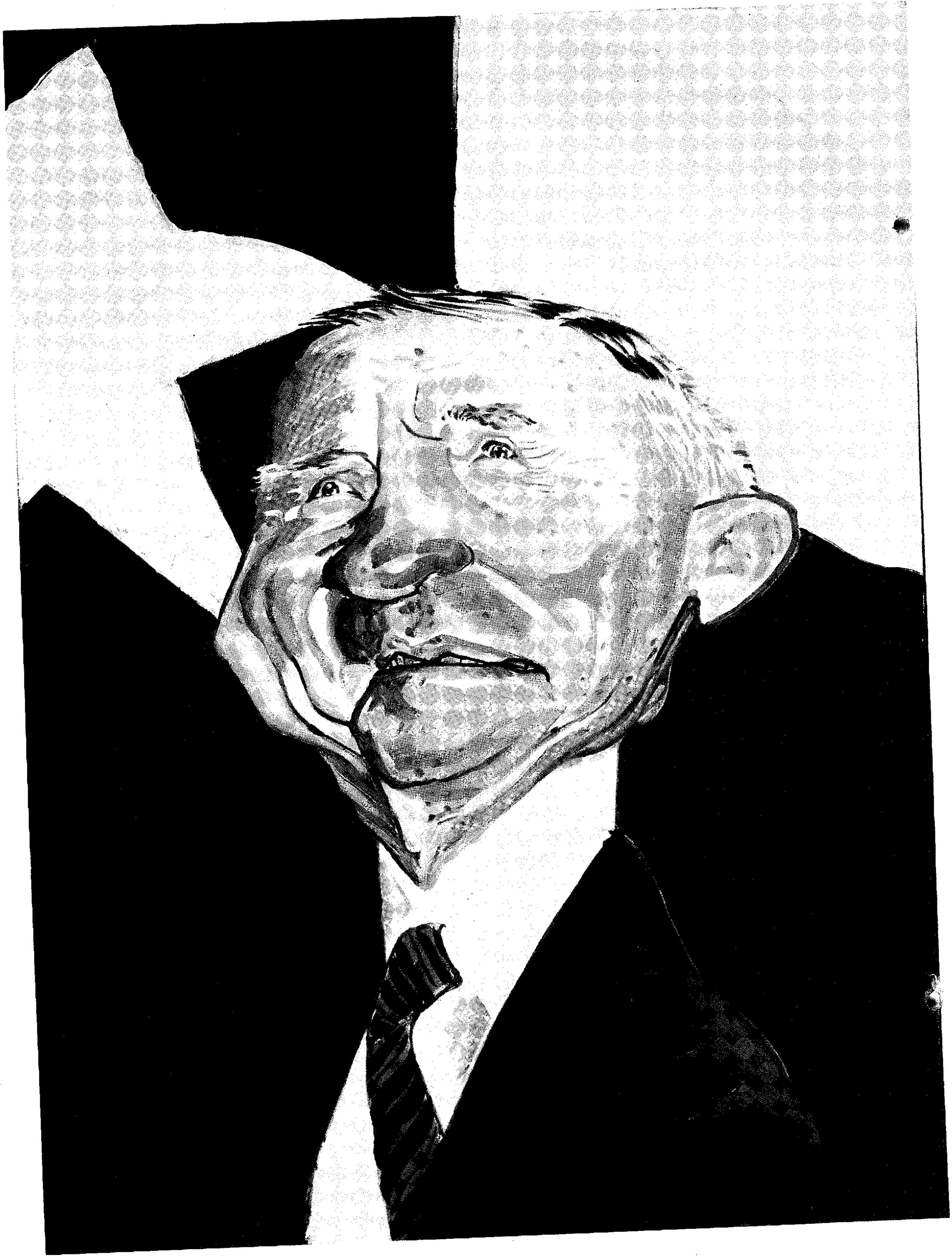
involvement: coughing, wheezing, and so forth." He added that if H.I.V. did mutate into AIDS-flu, the question was whether it would remain fatal. Would it kill its human hosts or would it evolve toward something more benign, something like a nasty but survivable cold? "The human population is genetically diverse, and I have a hard time imagining everyone getting wiped out by a virus," he said. "But if one in three people on earth were killed—something like the Black Death in the late Middle Ages—the breakdown of social organization could be just as deadly, almost a species-threatening event."

I DROVE to Reston one day in autumn to see the former Primate Quarantine Unit, and stopped my car in front of the building. A sycamore tree on the lawn dropped an occasional leaf. The place was as quiet as a tomb. "For Lease" signs sat in front of many of the offices around the parking lot. I sensed the presence not of a virus but of financial illness—signs of convalescence from the eighties, like your skin peeling off after a bad fever. I parked beside a school and walked across the grassy area behind the former monkey house until I reached the glass door that had been the insertion point. It was locked. Shreds of silver duct tape dangled from the door's edges. I looked inside and saw a floor mottled with reddish-brown stains. A sign on an inner wall said "CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS." I discerned the air-lock corridor—the gray zone through which the teams had passed into the hot zone. It had unpainted cinder-block walls: the ideal gray zone.

My feet rustled through shreds of plastic in the grass. I heard a ball bounce, and saw a boy dribbling a basketball in the school playground. The ball cast rubbery echoes off the buildings. I walked along the back wall of the former monkey house until I came to a window. Inside the building, climbing vines had rioted, and had pressed themselves against the inside of the glass. The vine was Tartarian honeysuckle, a weed that grows in waste places and abandoned ground. I couldn't see through the leaves into the former hot zone. I walked around to the side of the building, and found another glass door, beribboned with tape. I pressed my nose against the glass and cupped my hands around my eyes, and saw a bucket smeared with a dry brown crust. It looked like monkey excrement. I guessed that it had been stirred with Clorox. A spider had strung a web between a wall and the bucket of shit, and had dropped husks of flies and yellow jackets on the floor. Ebola had risen in these rooms, flashed its colors, replicated, and subsided into the forest. ♦



LETTER FROM DALLAS

BIG D, LITTLE H.R.P.

by Lawrence Wright

IN this deeply insecure city, H. Ross Perot's bewildering, up-and-down, in-and-out-and-in-again foray into presidential politics has become almost too much to bear. No place in America cares more about its image, but for the past thirty years the perceptions that most Americans have about Dallas have been formed by the Kennedy assassination; by J. R. Ewing, the villainous hero of the television show "Dallas"; by the savings-and-loan scandals; and now by the stumbling campaign of Ross Perot. It's as if Dallas had been damned to some kind of public-relations hell without ever really knowing what its original sin was. In other parts of the country, people who have watched the Perot campaign take off, then blow to pieces, then struggle back to some kind of zombielike existence may wonder what is wrong with Perot. In Dallas, the neurotic response is "What is wrong with us?"

The identification between Dallas and its most famous citizen is profound and long-standing, like a marriage in which the partners grow to resemble each other. Like Perot, Dallas presents itself as brash and cocksure, infectiously optimistic and full of answers, but anyone who has come to know the city well will recognize a paranoid side, which is also mirrored in Perot: thin-skinned, suspicious, intolerant, easily offended, yet perpetually hungry for approval. "Dallas has this sense that other people are always making judgments about it, that some committee meets in New York or Washington to decide how Dallas has done this year," Jim Schutze, a writer and longtime Dallas observer, says. "There's not such a committee—is there?"

As Perot's political fortunes have risen and fallen, so have the expectations of Dallas. In the period that people here call Perot One—the spring and early summer, before his abrupt withdrawal, on July 16th—the city was electrified by his talk-show candidacy. Suddenly, the whole country awakened to a man strongly associated in the public mind with Dallas's well-advertised values of superpatriotism and individualism, its can-do spirit, its impatience with government. Surely, no one could articulate those values better than Ross Perot. "He was going to vindicate us," Lee Cullum, a columnist for the Dallas *Morning News*, says. The disappointment, heartbreak, and anger—and, especially, the embarrassment—that one finds in Dallas now are a reflection of how betrayed the city feels by the promise of Perot One and the farce of Perot Two.

PHILIP BURKE

Perot's reëntry into the race has once again forced conservative Dallasites to make an awkward choice between their native son and the (hybrid) Texan already in the White House. "Perot is much more one of us than Bush," Cullum notes, but the election may well turn on whether Bush can carry his adopted home state. On the morning of the first debate, a Texas Poll had both Bush and Clinton at thirty-five per cent and Ross Perot at seventeen per cent. Even the slightest tilt toward Perot could capsize Bush's chances—or Clinton's, for that matter—but in Republican Dallas the concern is that both the Party and the state will lose. It is galling to realize that Bush's defeat could be engineered by a man they thought was one of their own. "I've considered Ross Perot a friend for thirty-five years," the Dallas attorney William McKenzie says. "But I can't go along with him on this trip. He's a quitter and a spoiler."

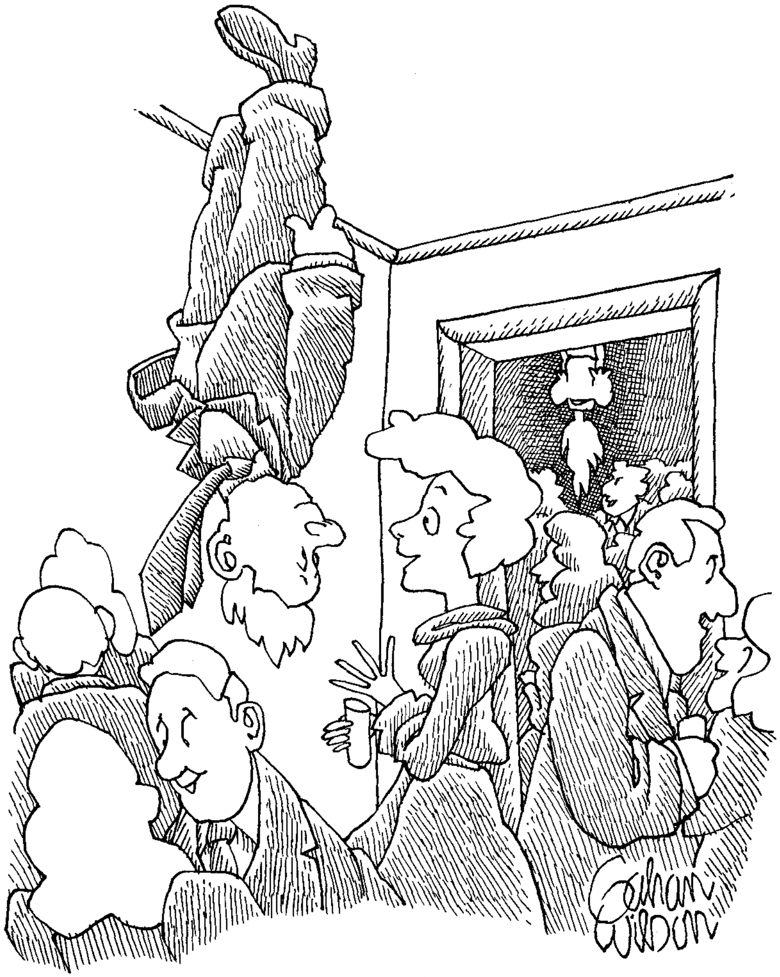
IN Dallas, there has always been a throne reserved for the richest man in town. "It's almost like the way the British look at royalty," Bob Ray Sanders, a public-television and talk-radio host, says. "That's how Dallas looks at its millionaires. There is a reverence there." For nearly forty years, the throne was occupied by H. L. Hunt, a figure of obsessive interest in Dallas, and one whose extreme conservative politics came to represent the city in ways it couldn't always control. Hunt created the familiar folksy style of the Dallas billionaire. Many people recall seeing him sitting on his front porch playing checkers with his family. Like Perot, Hunt surrounded himself with powerful patriotic images: he lived in a nearly exact reproduction of Mount Vernon (Hunt's version was somewhat larger), and every morning he himself raised the American flag in his front yard before driving to work in his modest Oldsmobile with his sack lunch at his side.

In part because of Hunt, Dallas gained a reputation in the fifties and sixties as a city of super-rich superpatriots, of wheeler-dealers, more interested in high risk than in hard work. (Hunt purportedly had gained his own fortune, in oil leases, in a Dallas poker game.) Although Hunt was the wealthiest man in the world, he gave practically nothing to the city he lived in. He was very much a stranger on the Dallas social scene, which revolves around charitable causes; moreover, many Dallasites were embarrassed by his bigotry and his zany political ideas, such as pegging the weight of a person's vote to the amount of taxes he pays. The fact that Hunt was also a bigamist and what Perot might call a "world class" philanderer was a stake in the heart of sanctimonious Dallas society.

By the time Hunt died, in 1974, at the age of eighty-five, Dallas had a lively young successor to place on the throne: in 1968, Ross Perot had been named by *Fortune* "the fastest richest Texan ever." As it happens, Perot and Hunt met on one occasion, when Perot was still working for I.B.M. He was seeking contributions to the United Way. "Everybody said it would be very difficult to get Mr. Hunt to give any money," Perot recalled recently. "Well, he gave me a very nice contribution." That scene between the tightfisted reprobate and the persuasive, civic-minded computer salesman says much about the changes in the city's sources of wealth and the expectations Dallas formed of Hunt's successor. Perot was never as rich as Hunt, but he promised to be a far better standard-bearer for the city's image. Hunt was a crank and a laughingstock, who left no real mark on

Dallas, and whose fortune was largely squandered in the second generation. By contrast, Perot was sensible, enterprising, and scrupulously moral, with a wife who interested herself in social affairs, and gleaming children who might be trusted stewards of the Perot fortune far into the future.

Perot became a business-class hero in Dallas in a way that Hunt never did. One can imagine the effect Perot created as he leapt from one adventure to another: making his flamboyant, highly publicized 1969 Christmas trip to Southeast Asia to focus world attention on American P.O.W.s in Vietnam; trying to save Wall Street; warring with General Motors; reforming Texas drug laws and bringing the state's education establishment to its knees; rescuing his employees in Iran. He certainly wasn't sitting around playing checkers on the porch. He redeemed the Dallas super-rich stereotype by subtracting the bigotry and adding a more moderate political coloration. If Perot tended to play by his own rules and hold himself apart from local politics, he nevertheless embodied the individualistic values that the culture holds close to its heart. "Everyone loves a maverick, Texans in particular," the Dallas publisher and rancher Anne Dickson says. "He revitalized all the myths. He was a reinforcement of the kind of characters that are produced in this part of the country. Plus, the money was in keeping with the Texas tradition—people building huge fortunes from nothing and using the money as leverage to get their points across."



"Have I got a girl for you!"

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NO one in Dallas could claim to have an inside track on Perot's thinking; his closest advisers, even his family, were caught short by his impetuous decision, in February, to offer himself as a candidate. His wife, Margot, found out, like everyone else, by watching "Larry King Live." His son, Ross, Jr., who had been a Bush supporter up to that point, had the same experience, but two days later. He was in Manila, talking to the Philippine government about privatizing the Subic Bay naval base. He came back to his hotel room to watch a delayed broadcast of the show. No one had called to tell him that his father had been running for President for the past forty-eight hours.

The emotional investment Dallas had in Perot was evident in its immediate response to his announcement that he would be a candidate if people were to put him on the ballot in all fifty states. The Perot Petition Committee sprang to life in Dallas. Within a few weeks, there were three thousand volunteers passing out bumper stickers at traffic lights, sweltering at card tables in unshaded parking lots, canvassing in shopping malls. It was a political earthquake, and Dallas was its epicenter. "No campaign in my lifetime has ever had such manpower," Lee Jackson, a county judge who is a co-chairman of the Bush campaign in Dallas, says. "Perot's presence was palpable and astounding, because it was fast and spontaneous and its troops were fresh. It looked unlike anything we'd ever seen in politi[illegible] before."

Dallas is usually the most reliably Republican city in the state, if not in the country, but the prospect of Perot's candidacy drove a wedge into the Republican ranks. "The Party establishment was lock-solid for the President," Rob Allyn, a young advertising executive who works for a number of Republican candidates in Texas, says. "But once you got outside the volunteers to the voter base of the Party, those people were uniformly for Ross Perot—everyone from bankers and management consultants down to the person who cuts my hair and the guy at the gas station. All lock, stock, and barrel for Perot."

In the euphoria expressed by so many Dallasites, a perhaps more telling reaction was overlooked. That was the increasing reticence and mixed feelings of people who moved in the same business or social circles as Perot. "I don't think Dallas was ever totally sold on this man," says Sheldon Zimmerman, the rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, the most prominent Jewish congregation in the city. "A lot of ordinary people were supporting him, but the leadership never backed him."

"It bothered me that so many people were talking about Perot as if he were another Davy Crockett," Jim Schutze says. "The person they were describing didn't remotely resemble the person I'd seen on the move in Dallas for years."

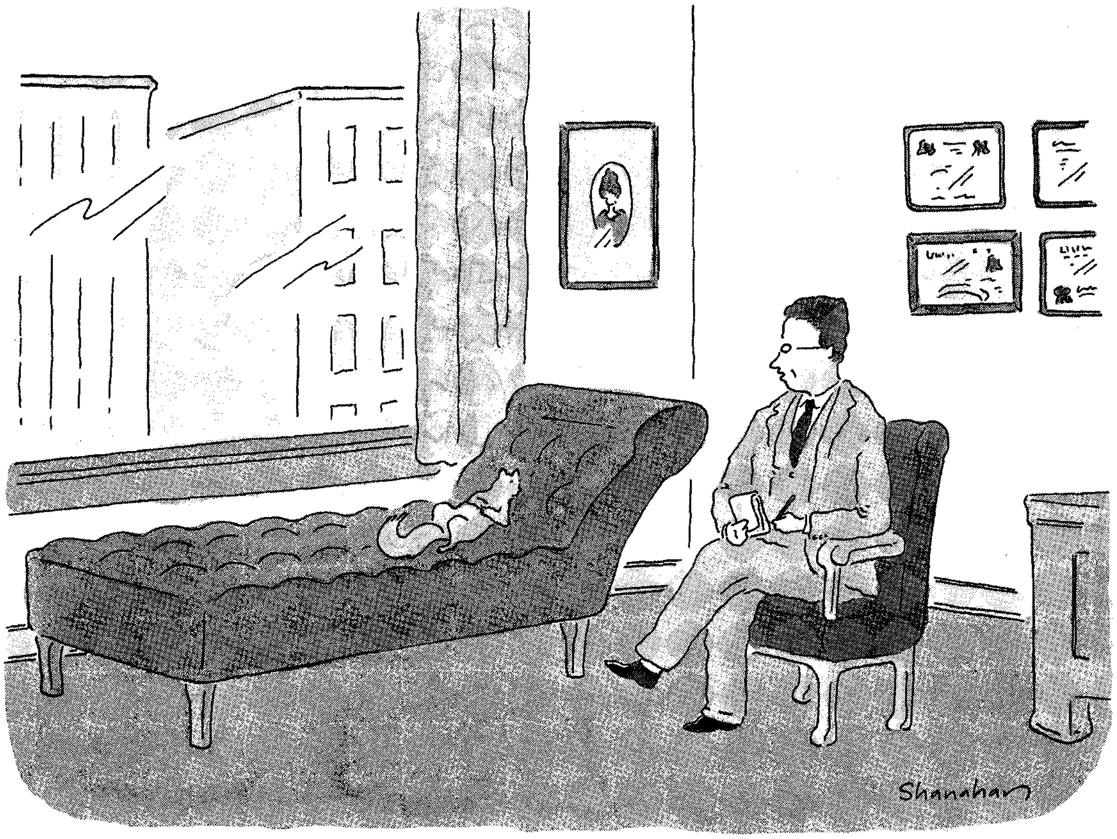
There were plenty of divided loyalties in Dallas even before Perot put himself into the race. Former Mayor Annette Strauss, for instance, is a lifelong Democrat, but she also knows the Bush family.

She indicated her support for the President early on (differing in that respect from her brother-in-law, Robert Strauss, who is Bush's Ambassador in Moscow but is a Clinton backer). She has known the Perots well for many years, and Perot was one of her strongest boosters during her tenure as mayor. "It's really hard for me to talk about this," she says. Roger Horchow, the mail-order-catalogue king and now a Broadway producer, has known the Perots for twenty years. He and Margot Perot serve on boards together; she invested in Horchow's tremendously successful musical comedy "Crazy for You," against her husband's pointed advice. ("I just wrote her another check," Horchow said cheerfully the other day.) Like the Strausses and many other Dallas families, the Horchows are also friendly with the Bushes. "Perot's announcement on the Larry King show caused a huge frenzy of activity," Horchow says. "It was sort of like civil war: friends and families were separated. The city was divided among those who took a very fast, firm, strong stand for Perot, those who thought he was crazy, and those who kept quiet, because they didn't want to anger either group." Horchow refuses to declare himself, because he serves on the nonpartisan White House Endowment Fund committee, which was organized by Barbara Bush; meanwhile, his wife and son-in-law have worked for the Perot campaign.

People who knew Perot were astonished by the amount of money it was said that his Presidential bid might cost—more than a hundred million dollars. "Perot simply doesn't spend that kind of money," one acquaintance observed. Although Perot was widely known for his philanthropy, especially in personal cases, such as providing for wounded soldiers or for the medical needs of his employees, his reputation for giving was mixed, to say the least. "He's been very generous, but he's no patsy," Stanley Marcus, the former head of Neiman-Marcus and the city's elder statesman, says. "You have to be sure when you do accept his philanthropy that you fulfill your part of the bargain." In 1986, Perot wrote out a check to the Dallas Arboretum for two million dollars, with a promise of six million more, then demanded his money back with interest when he decided that it wasn't sufficiently "world class" (part of what he wanted was an observation tower that the arboretum's neighbors vetoed). He finally relented and gave up the two million after being jeered at in the press. After the arboretum incident, Perot made a point of telling people that he had turned against Dallas. "I have invested an awful lot of money in the paths of many cities, but not in Dallas," he told a reporter.

Hovering in the background was Dallas's fear that Ross Perot would turn out to be another H. L. Hunt after all. The alienation that existed between Perot and Dallas could mean that once again a great fortune would be made in the city and Dallas would have little to show for it—or, worse, Perot would turn his resources against the city, as some now believe he was doing in the late nineteen-eighties by creating Alliance Airport, in Fort Worth, to compete with Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. Alliance Airport is actually run by Ross, Jr.—a bid for his own identity. Before the campaign, it was nationally praised as an example of government and private enterprise working together to create an immense, multipurpose development that could generate as many as forty thousand jobs in North Texas. Early in the campaign, however, Alliance became the subject of many investigative stories suggesting that it was little more than a clever rip-off of taxpayers' money. "The image of that project has been completely ruined," says a friend of Ross, Jr.,'s, who describes him as being philosophical about his father's campaign. "Basically, he's had to put his own life on hold. He's under no illusion that his father's going to be living in the White House."

THE intense media scrutiny that followed Perot's skyrocketing popularity worried many people in Dallas, in part because the negative publicity directed at their native son reflected on the city's values and stirred up old resentments about the cruel things said in other parts of the country after the

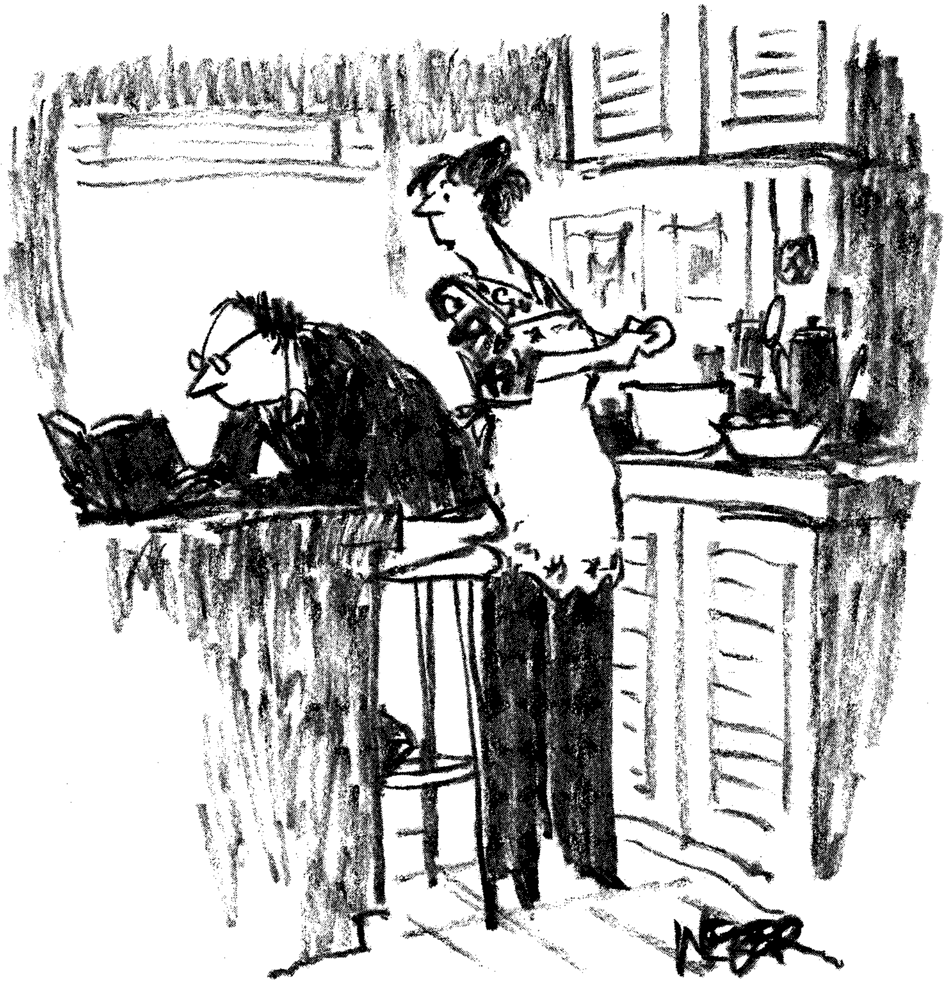


"Then again, we are what we eat."

Kennedy assassination. The city views itself as being friendly to a fault, perhaps a little clumsy socially, but well-meaning and good-natured and fundamentally lovable, so it is always shocked to see itself characterized as cold and vicious. Much as the television show "Dallas" caused the city to become a byword for the grasping, heartless, paranoid behavior of J. R. Ewing, the press attacks on Perot assumed a cultural importance in Dallas. The stories of Perot's secretiveness, his sometimes petty and mean-spirited attacks on colleagues, his frequent use of private investigators to dig up dirt on his opponents all found a resonant chord in a city that had heard it before. "There is a jarring J.R.-ishness about Ross Perot," Allyn says. "He fulfills those old myths just about when we had everyone convinced that that was only a stereotype."

Still, bad publicity was to be expected in a Presidential contest, and few people in Dallas were really surprised to read that Perot was a tough, autocratic, self-interested businessman who shot from the hip and liked to do things his way or not at all. "All that talk about Perot being a little Hitler with a proclivity for hiring private detectives bothered people here not a whit," Lonnie Kliever, a professor of religious studies at Dallas's Southern Methodist University, says. "What bothered them was his cowardice—that he turned tail and ran when the media turned up the heat. It made him look childish, and it was one more nail in the coffin of the self-image of Dallas as a city that can do anything. He exposed our political naïveté."

When Perot abruptly withdrew from the race in July, saying he had concluded that he could not win and that his continued presence in the campaign would only be a disruption of the political process, the city was stunned. Beyond the misery of phone-bank volunteers who felt betrayed, and of stranded supporters who had actually quit their jobs to join what they believed was a historic populist uprising, there was a more salient reaction—shame. This just wasn't Texan. This wasn't the pioneer spirit.



"I want you to promise you'll take some of your Nobel Prize money and buy yourself something nice."

"When he announced he was quitting, what I did not hear was 'Oh, I'm so disappointed, he would have been so good for the country,' " Jim Schutze says. "What I did hear was 'Oh, this makes us look really stupid.' "

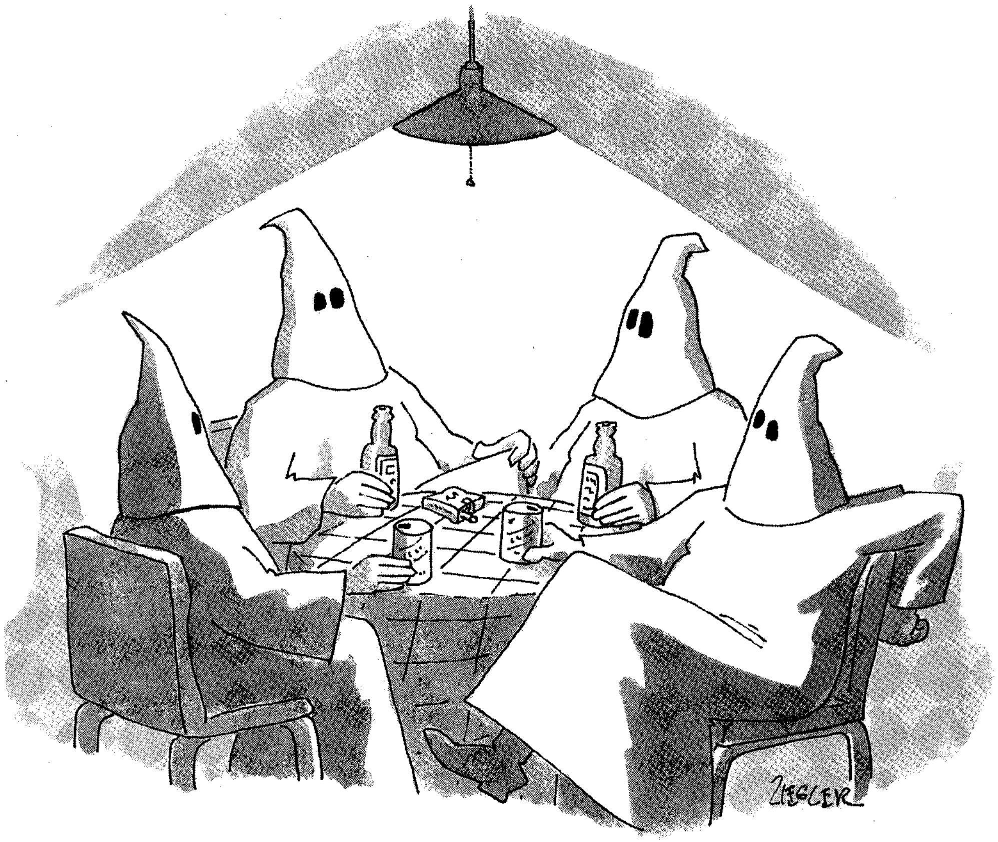
Outside Perot's family, the people who were closest to him had never been enthusiastic about his entering the race, and now they were having to endure the humiliating withdrawal of the candidacy they had never encouraged. Both Morton Meyerson, Perot's most important business adviser, and Tom Luce, his legal counsel for nearly twenty years, had reportedly told him that running for President was an awful idea. (Luce, at least, knew some of the perils of political candidacy: He had run in the last gubernatorial primary as a pro-choice, establishment Republican, and lost to Clayton Williams, a tough-talking businessman cowpoke in the can-do, Ross Perot mold. Luce had then watched Williams destroy his own campaign with several ill-considered wisecracks.)

Meyerson and Luce were deeply obligated to Perot. He had made them wealthy men, and he gave ten million dollars to the Dallas Symphony so that a new hall would be named in honor of Meyerson. (The hall, designed by I. M. Pei, is affectionately known as the Mort.) Perot had selected Luce as a young, inexperienced attorney to handle his intricate legal affairs, and Luce had built a prestigious law firm, largely based on that association. When he ran for governor, his campaign slogan was "Get Tom Luce"—supposedly Perot's first words when he learned that his employees had been imprisoned in Iran. After Luce lost, Perot wrote a check that wiped clean his campaign debt.

And so, after Perot decided he was running, Luce and Meyerson signed on as his chief advisers. It was Luce who began assembling the team that would run the campaign, and often it was Luce who bore the brunt of Perot's short temper. "Either this is a unique moment in American political history or it's not," he would say equitably when reporters asked if he thought Perot had any chance of winning. When Perot quit the race, it was Luce—not the candidate—who came to the petition-committee headquarters to confront the volunteers.

Suddenly, the effort of the past four months, the tension, the sleeplessness all gave way, and Luce broke down and wept. For many of the volunteers, it was the only consoling moment of that awful morning; they would compare it with Perot's snappish remarks to them two days later, when he boasted of firing people he considered disloyal.

For many in Dallas, Luce and, to a lesser extent, Meyerson are the most conspicuous victims of Perot's whimsical campaign. Their standing in the community was tied to their long-term benefactor, and Luce's political future in Texas was demolished by his support of Perot. "A moral question arises about these men," a friend of both men says. "When is their debt to Ross going to be paid? When are they going to be set free?" Meyerson has crept back onto the fringes of the campaign—he was present at the first debate, in St. Louis—but Luce has said privately that he is done with it. Soon after Perot's withdrawal, Bush summoned Luce to the White House to seek his support. Luce went, apparently feeling that he didn't need to consult Perot. When Perot heard about it, he was furious. After all that Luce had been through for Perot, this single act of what Perot construed as disloyalty was too much to accept. The two men have scarcely spoken since.



"Ethnic cleansing. It's got a nice ring to it.
Let's find out who's doing their P.R."

ON September 28th, Bush came to Dallas to take credit for an anti-crime effort in the city and to raise money for his stalled campaign. His support may be more tepid in Dallas than in Houston, but he is quite well known here. (His son George, Jr., lives in Dallas and is a part owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team.) That evening, Bush attended two fund-raisers in Highland Park, the center of what passes in Dallas for Old Money—a back-yard reception for six hundred people at the home of the developer Harlan Crow and a sitdown dinner at the home of the investor Charles Wylie. Highland Park, rooted in the fortunes that were made in real estate, cotton, and oil in the early years of the century and, later, in insurance and the garment industry, has always been a reliable Republican cash cow, and that night the oak-tree-lined streets were choked with solid, understated Mercedeses and Town Cars. The President was serene. He spoke with an air of resignation about America's economic difficulties, saying that they were a result of a worldwide recession. Many people at the crowded Crow reception never caught so much as a glimpse of him. Finally, Bush said goodbye over the microphone in his limo. "It was like the voice of God," one partygoer recalls.

The two affairs raised more than three-quarters of a million dollars, an indication that the old, moneyed Dallas families had circled their wagons around George Bush. In the eyes of the traditional Republicans of Highland Park, Perot had committed an act of treason by ever offering himself to the voters in the first place. Texas already had a President.

Privately, many of the Highland Park crowd had been relieved by Perot's withdrawal and were mortified by his possible reëntry. That very day, Perot demonstrated once again his astonishing clout, by getting both political parties to send high-level delegations to Dallas to offer a humiliating private viewing of their platforms to Perot's supporters. It was apparent to everyone in Dallas that Perot was merely orchestrating his return to the race. Included in the delegations were both Texas senators, the Republican Phil Gramm and the Democrat Lloyd Bentsen. The fact that such powerful men would come and kneel at Perot's feet was evidence that his three billion dollars and the public discontent he had tapped into would continue to influence the country and the state. There was a new moon in the political universe, and it exerted its own force of gravity.

For that reason, Old Dallas spoke cautiously about Perot. "We still have to live in the same town with him," one man observed. Moreover, no matter what people thought about Perot privately, there was a reluctance to be candid, out of fear that the criticism would reflect badly on the city. "If there's any Perot-bashing going on, you'll find Dallas closing ranks behind him," one prominent socialite said. "Like it or not, he's one of us."

True—although anyone in Dallas

could tell you that Ross Perot was not a part of Highland Park. He never conformed to the country-club Republicanism that made George Bush such an easy fit. Indeed, Perot's politics were always hard for Dallas to fathom. He spread money on both parties, but he rarely backed a candidate in public. Perot's hostility to Bush, however, had been a part of the lore for years. Some of their mutual friends could recall an occasion four years before at a party at the Mansion, an elegant hotel on Turtle Creek, owned by Caroline Hunt. It was the primary season, and many of the guests were wearing Bush buttons on their lapels. Perot took the opportunity to deride Bush loudly in such personal terms that some guests were genuinely offended. When someone finally asked Perot whom he did intend to support, if not Bush, he astonished everyone by saying he was backing Jesse Jackson.

d. ehrenberg

PEROT TWO began on October 1st, as network vans, with their satellite dishes, crowded into the parking lot behind the Doubletree Inn, in North Dallas. This section of town, which starts a few blocks above Highland Park and stretches through miles of privately patrolled suburbs, is Perot country. The money represented here has been made comparatively recently, mainly in the thriving high-tech companies such as Recognition Equipment, E-Systems, Texas Instruments, Optical Data Systems, and, of course, the mammoth Electronic Data Systems, the empire that Perot created. North Dallas is politically less stable and less firmly rooted in tradition than Highland Park; the people who live here tend to be newcomers to town. They drive snazzier cars, and a lot of them don't know or care what happened at the Alamo; for that matter, many of them weren't born when Kennedy was murdered, and the power of that trauma in the city's emotional life is a little mysterious to them. North Dallas doesn't exactly turn its back on the old city, but it is safe to say that the area leans more toward the industrial parks of Plano than toward the skyscrapers of downtown. It is also true that many of the people in Highland Park who had attended Bush's fund-raisers would get completely lost in this part of town without a map to tell them where they were.

Main Street in North Dallas is the L.B.J. Freeway, which runs like a busy river past hotels and gargantuan shopping malls and the marble-and-glass office towers of the new economy: a modern, surprisingly tasteful, scrupulously clean, business-oriented vision of utopia, adorned with fountains, artificial lakes, and, everywhere, American flags. Perot lives in this neighborhood, inside a walled compound on Strait Lane. His investment company, the Perot Group, is on the top floor of one of the shiny office buildings that look out on White Rock Creek. Although his campaign headquarters is just a few blocks away from his office, he sometimes pops over by helicopter, leaving his famous Oldsmobile in the parking lot.

Inside the Doubletree Inn, in the Lincoln Ballroom, Ross Perot formally announced for President once more, to a crowd of openly scoffing reporters. Standing on the dais with him were Orson Swindle, an adviser; Perot's Vice-Presidential choice, Admiral James Stockdale (Ret.); Stockdale's wife, Sybil; Perot's sister, Bette, and three of his five children; and Margot Perot, wearing a suit in the bright yellow that is her trademark in Dallas society. Unlike her husband, Mrs. Perot is still very much admired in this city, because of her many charitable efforts. On this occasion, she stood beside her husband looking grim-faced and stricken, never smiling once. Her stoic expression could have been the face of Dallas itself.

"Thank God he's back in the race," Al Lipscomb, a black city councilman, says. Lipscomb, who is sometimes referred to as Dallas's Al Sharpton, has emerged as the city's most prominent and vocal Perot supporter.

In Perot's circles, however, there was a noticeable absence of comment. "I think people now are really worried and embarrassed for him," Jim Schutze says. "They understand this is all about his pride, that he's trying to reclaim his good name."

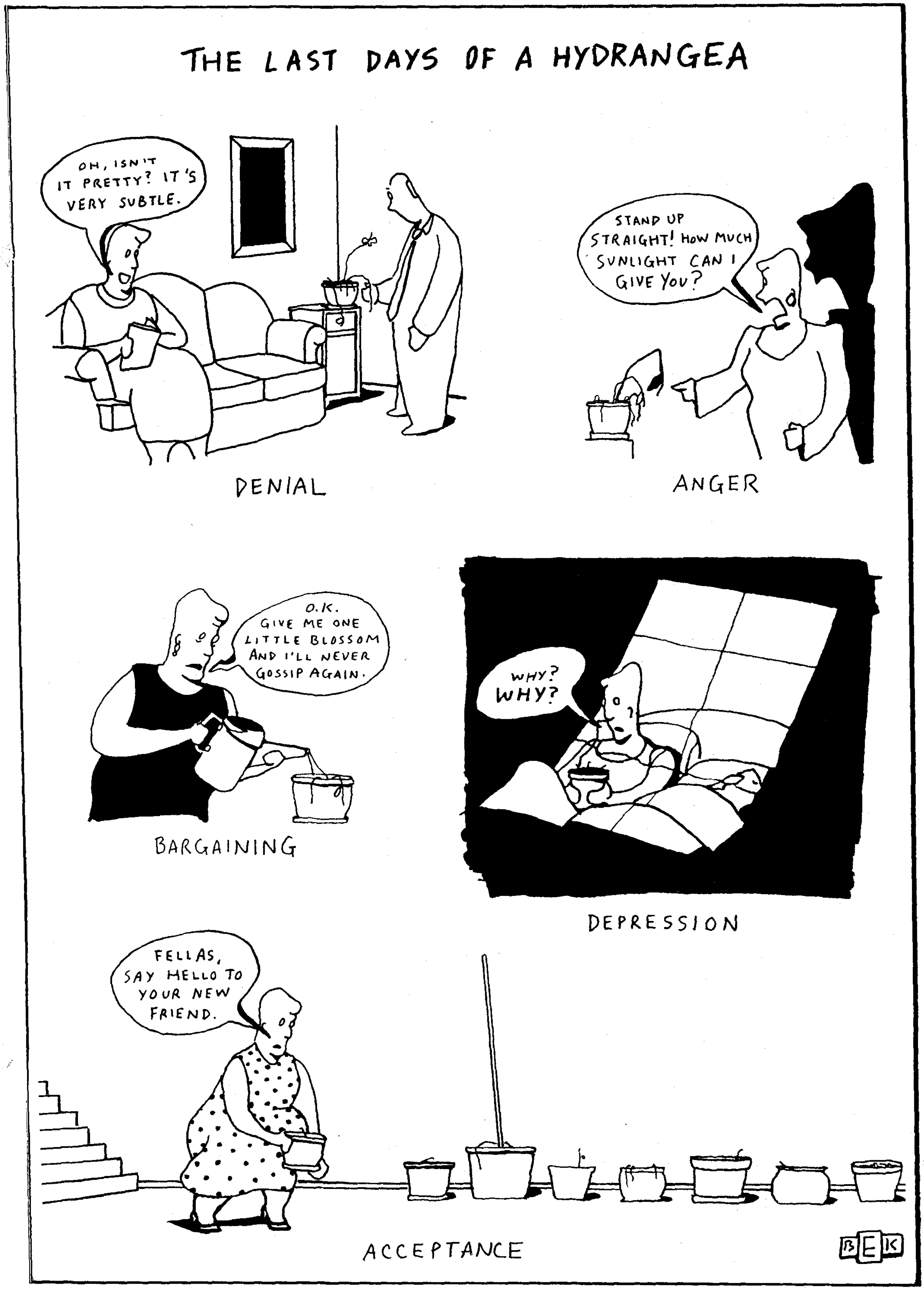
Perot's spunky performance in the debates demonstrated once again the charisma that had raised his standing in the three-man race to thirty-nine per cent in June, and left many people wondering what his chances of victory would have been in November if he had not pulled the plug in July. Callers to KLIF, Bob Ray Sanders' radio station, said they were impressed with Perot but doubted that they would vote for him. Many in Dallas think that Perot never really had solutions—just a genius for complaint. "Over all, no minds were really changed," Sanders says. Admiral Stockdale's poignant depiction of an earnest citizen wandering dizzily onto the battlefield of public issues provided a strong argument for why we need politicians in the first place.

The odd dilemma Dallas and Perot find themselves in now is that the further Perot goes toward salvaging his name and reputation in the campaign, the more damage he does to the candidate whom most Dallasites would like to see elected, and the angrier they will be at his kamikaze candidacy. The political fallout is likely to linger for a long time in Dallas, especially if Perot's reëntry does cause Bush to lose Texas. Perot, however, has done more than just wound an already limping incumbent. He has exposed divisions in the parties, in the country, and even in people themselves which hadn't been seen before. In this respect, the anger against Perot that many Dallasites have is simply, in a concentrated form, a feeling that people around the country share. What complicates the situation for Dallas is the lingering associations between the city and the candidate, and what those associations say about the culture that gave rise to him. "To the extent that anybody really does have a notion of Dallas, I guess there is a danger that Perot contributes to its image of being a crackpot place, which has a long history of producing political weirdos," Schutze says. "I guess the reason this bothers me is that I think it's true."

"I think in the beginning people in Dallas saw Perot as a positive image—suddenly, the whole world was paying attention to Dallas," Sanders says. "Now there's a lot of crying on the inside, because Dallasites sense the laughter at Perot."

"Perot was not a unifying element—he was very divisive in this city," Rabbi Zimmerman says. "Today, people feel that he's making a mockery of it. He's not only making a fool of himself, he's making Dallas look bad."

That is one sin Dallas will never forgive. ♦


THE LAST DAYS OF A HYDRANGEA
OH, ISN'T IT PRETTY? IT'S VERY SUBTLE.
DENIAL
STAND UP STRAIGHT! HOW MUCH SUNLIGHT CAN I GIVE YOU?
ANGER
O.K. GIVE ME ONE LITTLE BLOSSOM AND I'LL NEVER GOSSIP AGAIN.
BARGAINING
WHY? WHY?
DEPRESSION
FELLAS, SAY HELLO TO YOUR NEW FRIEND.
ACCEPTANCE
BEK

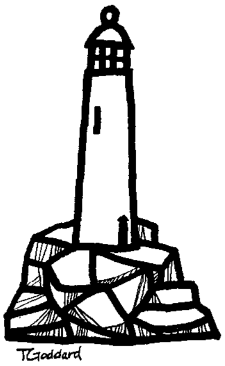
FICTION

THE CHINESE LOBSTER

by A. S. Byatt

THE proprietors of the Orient Lotus alternate frenetic embellishment with periods of lassitude and letting go. Dr. Himmelblau knows this because she has been coming here for quick lunches, usually solitary, for the last seven years or so. She chose it because it was convenient—it is near all her regular stopping places: the National Gallery, the Royal Academy, the British Museum—and because it seemed unpretentious and quietly comfortable. She likes its padded seats, even though the mock leather is split in places. She can stack her heavy book bags beside her and rest her bones.

The window onto the street has been framed in struggling cheese plants for as long as she can remember. They grow denser, dustier, and livelier as the years go by. They press their cutout leaves against the glass, the old ones holly-dark, the new ones yellow and shining. The glass distorts and folds them, but they press on. Sometimes there is a tank of colored fish in the window and sometimes not. At the moment there is not. You can see bottles of soy sauce, and glass containers that dispense toothpicks, one by one, and chrome-plated boxes full of paper napkins, also frugally dispensed one by one.



Inside the door, for the last year or so, there has been a low, square shrine, made of bright jade-green pottery, inside which sits a little brass god, or sage, in the lotus position, his comfortable belly on his comfortable knees. Small lamps and sticks of incense burn before him in bright-scarlet glass pots, and from time to time he is decorated with scarlet-and-gold shiny paper trappings. Dr. Himmelblau likes the color mixture, the bright blue-green and the saturated scarlet, so nearly the same weight. But she is a little afraid of the god, because she does not know who he is, and because he is obviously really worshipped, not just a decoration.

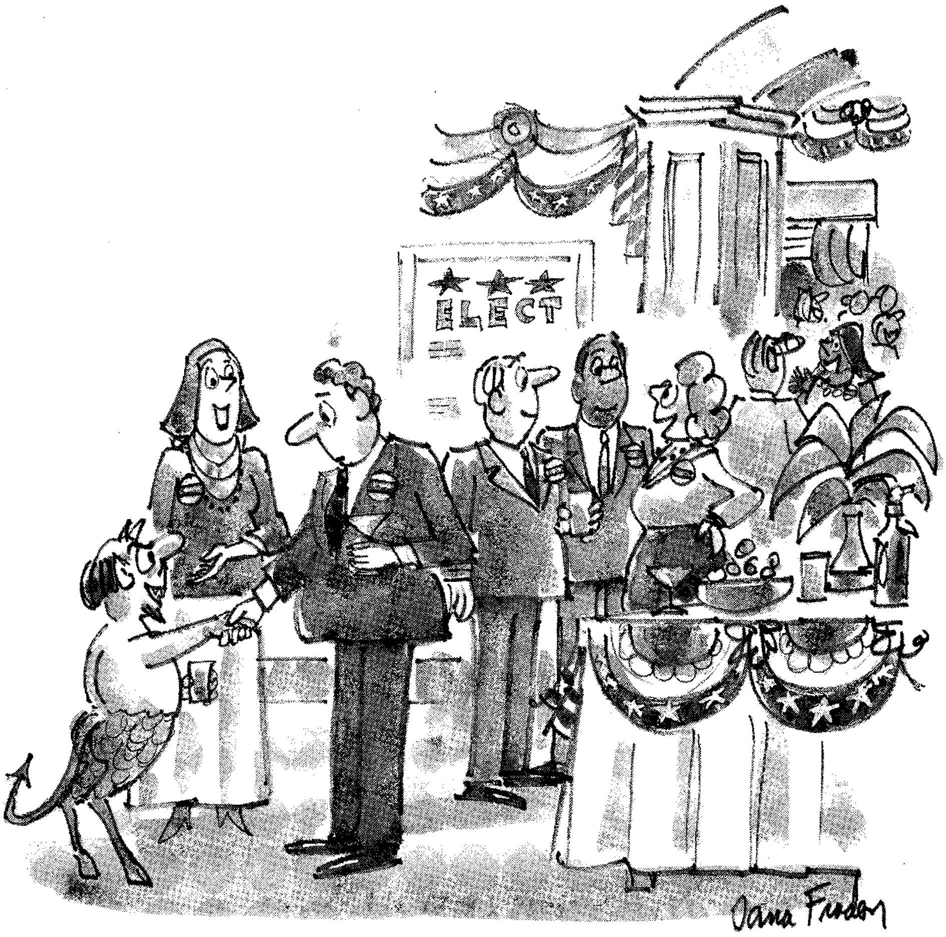
Today there is a new object, farther inside the door, but still before the tables or the coat hangers. It is a display case, in black lacquered wood, standing about as high as Dr. Himmelblau's waist—she is a woman of medium height—shining with newness and sparkling with polish. It is on four legs, and its lid and walls, about nine inches deep, are made of glass. It resembles cases in museums, in which you might see miniatures, or jewels, or small ceramic objects.

Dr. Himmelblau looks idly in. The display is brightly lit, and is arranged on a carpet of that fierce emerald-green artificial grass used by greengrocers and undertakers. Around the edges, on opened shells, is a border of raw scallops, the pearly flesh dulling, the repeating half-moons of the orange-pink roe playing against the fierce green.

In the middle, in the very middle, is a live lobster, flanked by two live crabs. All three, in parts of their bodies, are in feeble perpetual motion. The lobster, slowly in this unbreathable element, moves her long feelers and the little claws on the ends of her legs, which cannot go forward or back. She is black, and holds out her heavy great pincers in front of her, shifting them slightly; they are too heavy to lift up. The great muscles of her tail crimp and contort and collapse. One of the crabs, the smaller, is able to rock itself from side to side, which it does. The crabs' mouths can be seen moving from side to side, like scissors; all three crustaceans survey the world with mobile eyes still lively on little stalks. From their mouths come a silent hissing and bubbling, a breath, a cry. The colors of the crabs are matte: brick, cream, a grape-dark sheen on the claw ends, a dingy, earthy encrustation on the hairy legs. The lobster was, is, and will not be blue-black and glossy. For a moment, in her bones, Dr. Himmelblau feels their painful life in the thin air. They stare but do not, she supposes, see her. She turns on her heel and walks quickly into the body of the Orient Lotus. It occurs to her that the scallops, too, a[illegible] still in some sense, probably, alive.

The middle-aged Chinese man—she knows them all well, but knows none of their names—meets her with a smile and takes her coat. Dr. Himmelblau tells him she wants a table for two. He shows her to her usual table and brings bowls, china spoons, and chopsticks. The Muzak starts up. Dr. Himmelblau listens with comfort and pleasure. The first time she heard the Muzak she was dismayed; she put her hand to her breast in alarm at the burst of sound; she told herself that this was not, after all, the peaceful retreat she had supposed. Her noodles tasted less succulent against the tin noise. And then, the second or the third time, she began to notice the tunes, which were happy, banal, Western tunes, but jazzed up and sung in what she took to be Cantonese. "Oh, what a beautiful *morn*in', Oh, what a beautiful *day*. I got a beautiful *feelin'*, *Ev*erything's *go*in' my *way*." But in incomprehensible nasal syllables, against a zithery plink and plunk, a kind of gong, a sort of bell. It was not a song she had ever liked. But she has come to find it the epitome of restfulness and cheerfulness. Twang, tinkle, plink, *plink*. A cross-cultural object, an Occidental Orient, an Oriental Western. She associates it now with the promise of delicate savors, of warmth, of satisfaction. The middle-aged Chinese man brings her green tea, in the pot she likes with the little transparent rice-grain flowers in the blue-and-white porcelain, delicate and elegant.

She is early. She is nervous about the forthcoming conversation. She has never met her guest personally, though she has, of course, seen him, in the flesh and on the television screen; she has heard him lecture, on Bellini, on Titian, on Mantegna, on Picasso, on Matisse. His style is orotund and idiosyncratic. Dr. Himmelblau's younger colleagues find him rambling and embarrassing. Dr. Himmelblau, personally, is not of this opinion. In her view, Perry Diss is always talking about something, not about nothing, and in her view, which she knows to be the possibly crabbed view of a solitary intellectual nearing retirement, this is increasingly rare. Many of her colleagues, Gerda Himmelblau believes, do not *like* paintings. Perry Diss does. He loves them, like sound apples to bite into, like fair flesh, like sunlight. She is thinking in his style. This is a professional hazard, of her own generation. She has never had much style of her own, Gerda Himmelblau—only an acerbic accuracy, which is an *easy* style for a very clever woman who looks as though she ought to be dry. Not arid, she would not go so far, but dry. Used as a word of moderate approbation. She has long, fine brown hair, caught into a serviceable knot at the nape of her neck. She wears suits in soft, dark, not quite usual colors—damsons, soots, black tulips, dark mosses—with clean-cut cotton shirts, not masculine, but with no floppy bows or pretty ribbons, and in clear colors: palest lemon, deepest cream, periwinkle, faded flame. The suits are cut soft but the body inside them is, she knows, sharp and angular, as is her Roman nose and her judiciously tightened mouth.



"Fred, this is Congressman Morlen. The Congressman has been demonized by his opponent."

• •

SHE takes the document out of her handbag. It is not the original but a photocopy, which does not reproduce all the idiosyncrasies of the original: here, a grease stain, maybe butter; there what looks like a bloodstain, watered down at the edges; somewhere else, a kind of Rorschach stag beetle made by folding an ink blot. There are also minute drawings, in the margins and in the text itself. The whole is contained in a border of what appears to be high-arched wishbones, executed with a fine brush, in India ink. It is addressed in large majuscules:

TO THE DEAN OF WOMEN STUDENTS,
DR. GERDA HIMMELBLAU

and continues in minute minuscules,

from peggi nollett,
woman and student.

It goes on:

> I wish to lay a formal complaint against the DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSOR the Department has seen fit to appoint as the superviser of my disertation on "The Female Body and Matisse."
>
> In my view, which I have already made plain to anyone who cared to listen, and specificly to Doug Marks, Tracey Avison, Annie Manson, and also to you, Dr. Gerda Himmelblau, this person should never have been assigned to direct this work, as he is *completley out of sympathy* with its feminist project. He is a so-called EXPERT on the so-called MASTER of MODERNISM, but what does he know about Woman or the internal conduct of the Female Body, which has always until now been MUTE and had no mouth to speak?

Here follows a series of tiny pencil drawings, which, in the original, Dr. Himmelblau can make out to be lips—lips ambiguously oral or vaginal, she put it to herself precisely—sometimes parted, sometimes screwed shut, sometimes spattered with what might be hairs.

> His criticisms of what I have written so far have always been null and extremely agressive and disstructive. He does not understand that my project is a-historical and *need not involve* any description of the so-called development of Matisse's so-called style or approach, since what I wish to state is esentially *critical,* and is presented from a *theoretical* viewpoint with insights provided from contemporary critical methods to which the cronology of Matisse's life or the order in which he comitted his "paintings" is *totaly irelevant.*
>
> However although I thought I should begin by stating my theoretical position yet again I wish at the present time to lay a specific complaint of *sexual harassment* against the D.V.P. I can and will go into much more detail believe me Dr. Himmelblau but I will set out the gist of it so you can see there is something here *you must take up.*
>
> I am writing while still under the effect of the shock I have had so please excuse any incoherance.
>
> It began with my usual dispirting CRIT with the D.V.P. He asked me why I had not writen more of the dissertation than I had and I said I had not been very well and also preocupied with getting on with my art-work, as you know, in the Joint Honors Course, the creative work and the Art History get equal marks and I had reached a *very difficult stage* with the Work. But I had writen some notes

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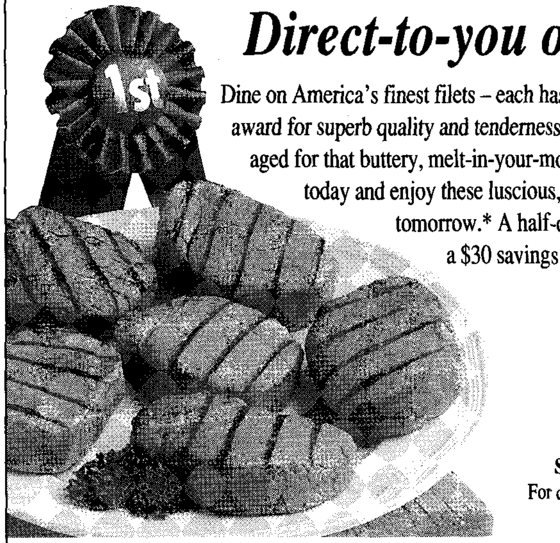

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on Matisse's *distortions* of the Female Body with respect especially to the specificly Female Organs, the Breasts the Cunt the Labia etc. etc. and also to his ways of acumulating Flesh on certain Parts of the Body which appeal to Men and tend to imobilise Women such as grotesqly swollen Thighs or protruding Stomachs. I mean to connect this in time to the whole tradition of the depiction of Female Slaves and Odalisques but I have not yet done the research I would need to write on this.

Also his Women tend to have no features on their faces, they are Blanks, like Dolls, I find this sinnister.

Anyway I told the D.V.P. what my line on this was going to be even if I had not yet written very much and he argued with me and went so far as to say I was hostile and full of hatred to Matisse. I said this was not a relevant criticism of my work and that Matisse was hostile and full of hatred towards women. He said Matisse was full of love and desire towards women (!!!!!) and I said "*exactly*" but he did not take the point and was really quite cutting and undermining and dismissive and unhelpful even if no worse had happened. He even said that in his view I ought to fail my degree which is no way for a supervisor to behave as you will agree. I was so tense and upset by his attitude that I began to cry and he patted me on my shoulders and tried to be a bit nicer. So I explained how busy I was with my art-work and how my art-work, which is a series of mixed-media pieces called Erasures and Undistortions, was a part of my criticism of Matisse. So he *graciously* said he would like to see my art-work as it might help him to give me a better grade if it contributed to my ideas on Matisse. He said art students often had difficulty expressing themselves verbally although he himself found language "as sensuous as paint." (It is not my place to say anything about his prose style but I could.) [This sentence is heavily crossed out but still legible.]

Anyway he came—*kindly*—to my studio to see my Work. I could see imediately he did not like it, indeed was repelled by it which I suppose was not a surprise. It does not try to be agreeble or seductive. He tried to put a good face on it and admired one or two *minor* pieces and went so far as to say there was a great power of feeling in the room. I tried to explain my project of *revising* or *reviewing* or *rearranging* Matisse. I have a three-dimensional piece in wire and plaster-of-Paris and plasticine called "The Resistance of Madame Matisse" which shows her and her daughter being *tortured* as they *were* by the Gestapo in the War whilst *he* sits by like a Buddha cutting up pretty paper with scissors. They wouldn't tell him they were being tortured in case it disturbed his *work.* I felt sick when I found out that. The torturers have got identical scissors.

Then the D.V.P. got personal. He put his arm about me and hugged me and said *I had got too many clothes on. He said they were a depressing color* and he thought I ought to take them all off and *let the air get to me.* He said he would like to see me in bright colors and that I was really a *very pretty girl* if I would let myself go. I said my clothes were a statement about myself, and he said they were a *sad statement* and then he grabbed me and began kissing me and fondeling me and stroking intimate parts of me—it was disgusting—I will not write it down, but I can describe it clearly, believe me Dr. Himmelblau, if it becomes necesary, I can give chapter and verse of every detail, I am still shaking with shock. The more I struggled the more he insisted and pushed at me with his body until I said I would get the police the moment he let go of me, and then he came to his senses and said that in the *good old days* painters and models felt a bit of *humman warmth and sensuality* towards each other in the studio, and I said, not in my studio, and he said, clearly not, and went off, saying it seemed to him *quite likely* that I should fail both parts of my Degree.

Gerda Himmelblau folds the photocopy again and puts it back in her handbag. She then rereads the personal letter that came with it.

Dear Dr. Himmelblau,

I am sending you a complaint about a horible experience I have had. Please take it seriously and please help me. I am so unhappy, I have so little confidence in myself, I spend days and days just lying in bed wondering what is the point of getting up. I try to live for my work but I am very easily discouraged and sometimes everything seems so black and pointless it is almost hystericly funny to think of twisting up bits of wire or modelling plasticine. Why bother I say to myself and realy there isn't any answer. I realy think I might be better off dead and after such an experience as I have just had I do slip back towards that way of thinking of thinking of putting an end to it all. The doctor at the Health Center said just try to snap out of it what does *he* know? He ought to listen to people he can't realy know what individual people might do if they did *snap* as he puts it out of it, anyway out of what does he mean, snap out of what? The dead are snapped *into* black plastic sacks I have seen it on the television body bags they are called. I realy think a lot about being a body in a black bag that is what I am good for. Please help me Dr. Himmelblau I frighten myself and the contempt of others is the last straw snap snap snap snap.

Yours sort of hopefully,

peggi nollett

DR. HIMMELBLAU sees Peregrine Diss walk past the window with the cheese plants. He is very tall and very erect—columnar, thinks Gerda Himmelblau—and has a great deal of well-brushed white hair remaining. He is wearing an olive-green cashmere coat with a black velvet collar. He carries a black lacquered walking stick, with a silver knob, which he does not lean on but swings. Once inside the door, observed by but not observing Dr. Himmelblau, he studies the little god in his green shade, and then stands and looks gravely down on the lobster, the crabs, and the scallops. When he has taken them in, he nods to them, in a kind of respectful acknowledgment, and proceeds into the body of the restaurant, where the younger Chinese woman takes his coat and stick and bears them away. He looks round and sees his hostess. They are the only people in the restaurant; it is early.

"Dr. Himmelblau."

"Professor Diss. Please sit down. I should have asked whether you like Chinese food—I just thought this place might be convenient for both of us."

"Chinese food—well cooked, of course—is one of the great triumphs of the human species," says Diss. "Such delicacy, such intricacy, such simplicity, and so peaceful in the aging stomach."

"I like the food here. It has certain subtleties one discovers as one goes on. I have noticed that the restaurant is frequented by large numbers of real Chinese people, families, which is always a good sign. And the fish and vegetables are always very fresh, which is another."

"I shall ask you to be my guide through the plethora of the menu. I do not think I can face Fried Crispy Bowels, however much, in principle, I believe in venturing into the unknown. Are you partial to steamed oysters with ginger and spring onions? So intense, so *light* a flavor."

"I have never had them," says Gerda Himmelblau.

"Please try. They bear no relation to cold oysters, whatever you think of those. Which of the duck dishes do you think is the most succulent?"

They chat agreeably, composing a meal with elegant variations—a little hot flame of chili here, a ghostly fragrant sweetness of litchi there, the slatey tang of black beans, the elemental, earthy crispness of bean sprouts. Gerda Himmelblau looks at her companion, willy-nilly imagining him engaging in the assault described by Peggi Nollett. His skin is tanned and does not hang in pouches or folds, although it is engraved with crisscrossing lines of very fine wrinkles absolutely all over—brows, cheeks, neck, the armature of the mouth, the eye corners, the nostrils, the lips themselves. His eyes are a bright cornflower blue, and must, Dr. Himmelblau thinks, have been quite extraordinarily beautiful when he was a young man, in the nineteen-thirties. They are still surprising, though veiled now with jelly and liquid, though bloodshot in the cor-

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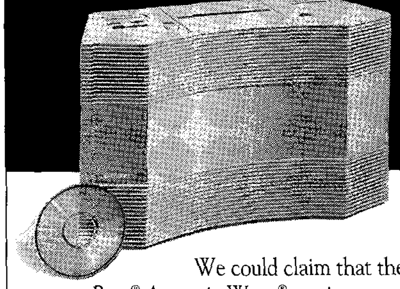

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ners. He wears a bright cornflower-blue tie, in rough silk, to go with them, as they must have been but also as they still are. He wears a corduroy suit, the color of dark slate. He wears a large signet ring, lapis lazuli, and his hands, like his face, are mapped with wrinkles but still handsome. He looks both fastidious and marked by ancient indulgence and dissipation, Gerda Himmelblau thinks fancifully, knowing something of his history, the bare gossip, what everyone knows.

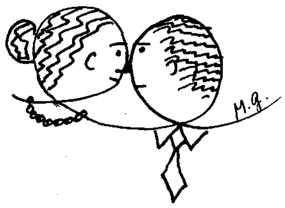
She produces the document during the first course, which is glistening viridian seaweed, and prawns, and sesame toasts. She says, "I have had this rather unpleasant letter, which I must talk to you about. It seemed to me important to discuss it informally and in an unofficial context, so to speak. I don't know if it will come as a surprise to you."

Perry Diss reads quickly, and empties his glass of Tiger beer, which is quickly replaced with another by the middle-aged Chinese man.

"Poor little bitch," says Perry Diss. "What a horrible state of mind to be in. Whoever gave her the idea that she had any artistic talent ought to be shot."

Don't say "bitch," Gerda Himmelblau tells him in her head, wincing.

"Do you remember the occasion she complains of?" she asks carefully.



"Well, in a way I do, in a way. Her account isn't very recognizable. We did meet last week to discuss her complete lack of progress on her dissertation. She appears indeed to have *regressed* since she put in her proposal, which I am glad to say I was *not* responsible for accepting. She has forgotten several of the meagre facts she once knew, or appeared to know, about Matisse. I do not see how she can *possibly* be given a degree—she is ignorant and lazy and pigheadedly misdirected—and I felt it my duty to tell her so. In my experience, Dr. Himmelblau, a lot of harm has been done by misguided kindness to lazy and ignorant students who have been cosseted and *nurtured* and never told they are not up to scratch."

"That may well be the case. But she makes specific allegations. . . . You went to her studio. . . ."

"Oh, yes. I went. I am not as brutal as I appear. I did try to give her the benefit of the doubt. That part of her account bears some resemblance to the truth—that is, to what I remember of these very disagreeable events. I did say something about the inarticulacy of painters, and so on—you can't have worked in art schools as long as I have without knowing that some can use words and some can only use materials. It's interesting how you can't always predict *which.*

"Anyway, I went and looked at her so-called work." He smiled. "The phraseology is catching—'so-called' . . . a pantechnicon contemporary term of abuse."

"And?"

"The work is *horrible,* Dr. Himmelblau. It disgusts. It desecrates. Her studio—in which the poor creature also eats and sleeps—is papered with posters of Matisse's work. 'Le Rêve.' 'Le Nu Rose.' 'Le Nu Bleu.' 'Grande Robe Bleue.' 'La Musique.' 'L'Artiste et Son Modèle.' 'Zorah sur la Terrasse.' And they have all been smeared and defaced. With what looks like *organic matter*—blood, Dr. Himmelblau, beef stew or feces. I incline towards the last, since I cannot imagine good *daube* finding its way into that miserable tenement. Some of the daubings are deliberate reworkings of bodies or faces—changes of outlines. Some are like thrown tomatoes—probably *are* thrown tomatoes—and eggs, yes, and some are *great swastikas of shit.* It is appalling. It is pathetic."

"It is no doubt meant to disgust and desecrate," states Dr. Himmelblau, neutrally.

"And what does that matter? *How can that excuse it?*" roars Perry Diss, startling the young Chinese woman, who is lighting the wax lamps under the plate warmer, so that she jumps back.

"Modern art," says Dr. Himmelblau, "has a tradition of protest."

"Traditional protest, hmph!" shouts Perry Diss, his neck reddening. "Nobody minds protest, I've protested in my time, we all have, you aren't the real thing if you don't have a go at being shocking, protest is de rigueur, *I know.* But what I object to here is the shoddiness, the laziness. It seems to me— Forgive me, Dr. Himmelblau, but this . . . this *caca* offends something I do hold sacred, a

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word that would make that little bitch *snigger*, no doubt, but sacred, yes—it seems to me that if she could have produced *worked copies* of those, those masterpieces, those shining—never mind … if she could have *done some work*, understood the blues, and the pinks, and the whites, and the oranges, yes, and the blacks, too, and if she could still have brought herself to feel she must, must *savage* them, *then* I would have had to feel some respect."

"You have to be careful about the word 'masterpieces,' " murmurs Dr. Himmelblau.

"Oh, I know all that stuff, I know it well. But you have got to listen to me. What she's done can have taken at the maximum *half an hour*—and there's no evidence anywhere in the silly girl's work that she's ever spent more than that actually *looking at* a Matisse! She has no accurate memory of a single one when we talk, *none*—she amalgamates them all in her mind into one monstrous female corpse bursting with male aggression. She can't *see*, can't you see? And for half an hour's shit-spreading we must give her a degree?"

"Matisse," says Gerda Himmelblau, "would sometimes make a mark, and consider, and put the canvas away for weeks or months until he knew where to put the next mark."

"I know."

"Well, the, the shit-spreading may have required the same consideration. As to location of daubs."

"Don't be silly. I *can see* paintings, you know. I did look to see if there was any wit in where all this detritus was applied. Any visual *wit*, you know. I know it's meant to be funny. There wasn't. It was just slapped on. It was horrible."

"It was meant to disturb you. It disturbed you."

"Look, Dr. Himmelblau, whose side are you on? I've read your Mantegna monograph. *Mes compliments*, it is a chef-d'oeuvre. Have you *seen* this stuff? Have you for that matter seen Peggi Nollett?"

"I am not on anyone's *side*, Professor Diss. I am the Dean of Women Students, and I have received a formal complaint against you, about which I have to take formal action. And that could be, in the present climate, very disturbing for me, for the Department, for the University, and for you. I may be exceeding my strict duty in letting you know of it in

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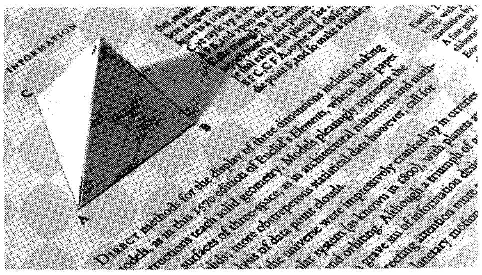

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this informal way. I am very anxious to know what you have to say in answer to her specific charge.

"And yes, I have seen Peggi Nollett. Frequently. And her work, on one occasion."

"Well, then. If you have seen her, you will know that I can have made no such, no such *advances* as she describes. Her skin is like a *potato*, and her body is like a *decaying potato*, in all that great bundle of smocks and vests and knitwear and penitential hangings. Have you seen her legs and arms, Dr. Himmelblau? They are bandaged like mummies, they are all swollen with strapping and strings, and then they are contained in nasty black greaves and gauntlets of plastic with buckles. You expect some awful yellow ooze to seep out between the layers, ready to be smeared on 'La Joie de Vivre.' And her hair. I do not think her hair can have been washed for some years. It is like a carefully preserved old frying pan, grease undisturbed by water. You *cannot believe* I could have brought myself to touch her, Dr. Himmelblau?"

"It is difficult, certainly."

"It is impossible. I may have told her that she would be better off if she wore fewer layers. I may even, imprudently—thinking, you understand, of potatoes—have said something about letting the air get to her. But I assure you that was as far as it went. I was trying against my instincts to converse with her as a human being. The rest is her horrible fantasy. I hope you will believe me, Dr. Himmelblau. You yourself are about the only almost-witness I can call in my defense."

"I do believe you," says Gerda Himmelblau with a little sigh.

"Then let that be the end of the matter," says Perry Diss. "Let us enjoy these delicious morsels and talk about something more agreeable than Peggi Nollett. These prawns are as good as I have ever had."

"It isn't so simple, unfortunately. If she does not withdraw her complaint you will both be required to put your cases to the Senate of the University. And the University will be required—by a rule made in the days when university senates had authority and power and money—to retain counsel to represent both of you, should you so wish. And in the present climate I am very much afraid that, whatever the truth of the matter, you will lose your job, and whether you do or don't lose it there will be disagreeable protests and demonstrations against you, your work, your continued presence in the University. And the Vice-Chancellor will fear the effect of the publicity on the funding of the College, and the course—which is the only joint honors course of its kind in London—may have to close. It is not seen by our profit-oriented masters as an essential part of our new . . . 'thrust,' I think they call it—our students do not contribute to the export drive."

"I don't see why not. They can't all be Peggi Nolletts. I was about to say—have another spoonful of bamboo shoots and bean sprouts—I was about to say, Very well, I'll resign on the spot and save you any further bother. But I don't think I can do that. Because I won't give in to lies and blackmail. And because that woman *isn't an artist*, and *doesn't work*, and *can't see*, and should not have a degree. And because of Matisse."

"Thank you," says Gerda Himmelblau, accepting the vegetables. And "Oh dear, yes," in response to the declaration of intent.

They eat in silence for a moment or two. The Cantonese voice asserts that it is a beautiful morning.

Dr. Himmelblau says, "Peggi Nollett is not well. She is neither physically nor mentally well. Those clothes are designed to obscure the fact that she has starved herself, apparently, almost to a skeleton."

"I see. Not a potato. A fork. A pin. A coat hanger."

"And she is in a very depressed state. There have been at least two suicide bids, to my knowledge."

"Serious bids?"

"How do you define 'serious'? Bids that would perhaps have been effective if they had not been well enough signalled, for rescue . . . "

"I see." Pause. "You do know that this does not alter the fact that she has no talent and doesn't work, and can't see."

"She *might*, if she were well."

"Do you think so?"

"No. On the evidence I have, no."

Perry Diss helps himself to a final, small bowlful of rice. He says, "When I was in China, I learned to end a meal with pure rice, quite plain, and to taste every grain. It is one of the most beautiful tastes in the world, freshly boiled rice. I don't know if it would be if it were all you had every day, if you were starving. It would be differently delicious, differently haunting, don't you think? You can't describe this taste."

Gerda Himmelblau helps herself, maneuvers delicately with her chopsticks, contemplates pure rice, says, "I see."

"Why Matisse?" Perry Diss bursts out again, leaning forward. "I can see she is ill, poor thing. You can *smell* it on her, that she is ill. That alone makes it unthinkable that anyone—that I—should *touch* her. . . ."

"As Dean of Women Students," says Gerda Himmelblau thoughtfully, "one comes to learn a great deal about this condition. It appears to stem from self-hatred and inordinate self-absorption. Especially with the body, and with that image of our own body we all carry around with us. One of my colleagues who is a psychiatrist collaborated with one of your colleagues in Fine Art to produce a series of drawings—clinical drawings, in a sense—which I have found most instructive. They show an anorexic person before a mirror: *we* see her staring ribs, hanging skin, and *she* sees grotesque bulges, huge buttocks, puffed cheeks. I have found these drawings most helpful."

"Ah. *We* see coat hangers and forks, and *she* sees potatoes and pumpkins. There is a painting in that. You could make an interesting painting out of that."

"Please—the experience is terrible to her."

"Don't think I don't know. I am not being flippant, Dr. Himmelblau. I am, or was, a serious painter. It is not flippant to see a painting in a predicament. Especially a predicament which is strongly visual, as this is."

"I'm sorry. I am trying to think *what to do*. The poor child wishes to annihilate herself. Not to be."

"So I understand. But *why Matisse*? If she is so obsessed with bodily horrors why does she not obtain employment as an emptier of bedpans or in a maternity ward or a hospice? And if she must take on Art, why does she not rework Giacometti into Maillol, or vice versa, or take on that old goat Picasso, who did things to women's bodies out of genuine *malice*. *Why Matisse*?"

"Precisely for that reason, as you must know. Because he paints silent bliss. *Luxe, calme et volupté*. How can Peggi Nollett bear *luxe, calme et volupté*?"

"When I was a young man," says Perry Diss, "going through my own Sturm und Drang, I was a bit bored by all that. I remember telling someone, my wife, it all was *easy and flat*. What a fool. And then one day I saw it. I saw how hard it is to see, and how full of pure power, once seen. Not *consolation*, Dr. Himmelblau, *life and power*." He leans back, stares into space, and quotes:

Mon enfant, ma soeur,
Songe à la douceur
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!
Aimer à loisir,
Aimer et mourir
Au pays qui te ressemble!

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté
Luxe, calme et volupté.

Dr. Himmelblau, whose own life has contained only a modicum of *luxe, calme et volupté*, is half moved, half exasperated by the vatic enthusiasm with which Perry Diss intones these words. She says dryly, "There has always been a resistance to these qualities in Matisse, of course. Feminist critics and artists don't like him because of the way he expands male eroticism into whole placid panoramas of well-being. Marxists don't like him because he himself said he wanted to paint to please businessmen."

"Businessmen and intellectuals," says Perry Diss.

"'Intellectuals' doesn't make it any more acceptable to Marxists."

"Look," says Perry Diss. "Your Miss Nollett wants to shock. She shocks with simple daubings. Matisse was cunning and complex and violent and controlled and *he knew he had to know exactly what he was doing*. He knew the most shocking thing he could tell people about the purpose of his art was that it was designed *to please and to be comfortable*. That sentence of his about the armchair is one of the most wickedly provocative things that has ever been said about painting. 'What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity, of quietness, without any disturbing subjects, without worry, which may be, for everyone who works with the mind, for the businessman as much as for the literary artist, something soothing, something to calm the brain, something analogous to a good armchair which relaxes him from his bodily weariness.' You know, you can daub the whole of the Centre Pompidou with manure from top to bottom and you will *never* shock as many people as Matisse

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did by saying art was like an armchair. People remember that with horror who know nothing about the context—"

"It would be perfectly honorable to argue that that was a very limited view," says Gerda Himmelblau.

"Honorable but impercipient. Who is it that understands *pleasure*, Dr. Himmelblau? Old men like me, who can only just remember their bones not hurting, who remember walking up a hill with a spring in their step like the red [illegible] the 'Red Studio.' Blind men who have had their sight restored and get giddy with the colors of trees and plastic mugs and the *terrible blue* of the sky. Pleasure is *life*, Dr. Himmelblau, and most of us don't have it, or not much, or mess it up ... and when we see it in those blues, those roses, those oranges, that vermilion, we should fall down and worship—for it is the thing itself. Who knows a good armchair? A man who has bone cancer, or a man who has been tortured, *he* can recognize a good armchair."

"And poor Peggi Nollett," says Dr. Himmelblau. "How can she see that, when she mostly wants to die?"

"Someone intent on bringing an action for rape, or whatever she calls it, can't be all that keen on death. She'll want to savor her triumph over her doddering male victim."

"She is *confused*, Professor Diss. She puts out messages of all kinds, cries for help, threats. . . . "

"Disgusting art works ..."

"It is truly not beyond her capacities to—to take an overdose and leave a letter accusing you, or me, of horrors, of insensitivity, of persecution. . . ."

"Vengefulness can be seen for what it is. Spite and malice can be seen for what they are."

"You have a robust confidence in human nature, to think a committee will see. And you simplify. The despair is as real as the spite. They are part of each other."

"They are failures of imagination."

"Of course," says Gerda Himmelblau. "Of course they are. Anyone who could imagine the terror, the pain, of those who survive a suicide—against whom a suicide is committed—could not carry it through."

Her voice has changed. She knows it has. Perry Diss does not speak but looks at her, frowning slightly. Gerda Himmelblau, driven by some pact she made long ago with accuracy, with truthfulness, says, "Of course, when one is at that point, imagining others becomes unimaginable. Everything seems clear, and simple, and *single;* there is only one possible thing to be done."

Perry Diss says, slowly, "That is true. You look around you and everything is bleached, and clear, as you say. You are in a white box, a white room, with no doors or windows. You are looking through clear water with no movement—perhaps it is more like being inside ice, inside the white room. There is only one thing possible. It is all perfectly clear and simple and plain. As you say."

They look at each other. The flood of red has subsided under Perry Diss's skin. He is thinking. He is quiet.

ANY two people may be talking to each other, at any moment, in a civilized way about something trivial, or even something complex and delicate. And inside each of the two there runs a kind of dark river of unconnected thought, of secret fear, or violence, or bliss—hoped-for or lost—which keeps pace with the flow of talk and is mostly neither seen nor heard. And then at times one or both of the two will catch sight or sound of this movement, in himself, or herself, or, more rarely, in the other. And it is like the quick slip of a waterfall into a pool, like a drop into darkness. The pace changes, the weight of the air, though the talk may run smoothly onward without a ripple or quiver.

Gerda Himmelblau is back in the knot of quiet terror which has grown in her private self like a cancer over the last few years. She remembers—which she would rather not do, but cannot now control—her friend Kay, sitting in a heavy leatherette hospital armchair, wearing a long white hospital gown, fastened at the back, and a striped dressing gown. Kay is not looking at Gerda. Her mouth is set, her eyes are sleepy with drugs. On the white gown are scarlet spots of fresh blood, where needles have injected calm into Kay. Gerda says, "Do you remember, we are going to the concert on Thursday?" and Kay says, in a voice full of stumbling, thick ill will, "No, I don't, what concert?" Her eyes flicker, she looks at Gerda and away, there is something malign and furtive in her look. Gerda has loved only one person in her life, her school friend Kay. Gerda has not married, but Kay has—Gerda was bridesmaid—and Kay has brought up three children. Kay was peaceful and kindly, and interested in plants, books, cakes, her husband, her children, Gerda. She was Gerda's anchor of sanity in a harsh world. As a young woman, Gerda had usually been described as "nervous" and also as "lucky to have Kay Leverett to keep her steady." Then one day Kay's eldest daughter was found hanging in her father's shed. A note had been left, accusing her schoolfellows of bullying. This death was not immediately the death of Kay; these things are crueller and slower. But over the years Kay's daughter's pain became Kay's, and killed Kay. She said to Gerda once, who did not *hear*, who remembered only later, "I turned on the gas and lay in front of the hearth all afternoon, but nothing happened." She "fell" from a window, watering a window box. She was struck a glancing blow by a bus in the street. "I just step out now and close my eyes," she told Gerda, who said, "Don't be silly, don't be unfair to bus drivers." Then there was the codeine overdose. Then the sleeping pills, hoarded with careful secrecy. And, a week after Gerda saw her in the hospital chair, the success—that is to say, the real death.

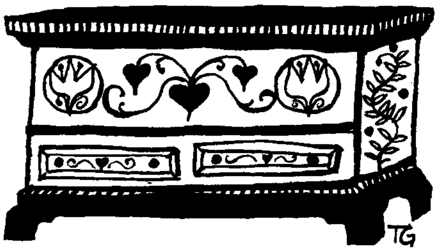
The old Chinese woman clears the meal, the plates veiled with syrupy black-bean sauce, the unwanted cold rice grains, the uneaten pea pods.

Gerda remembers Kay saying, earlier, when her pain seemed worse and more natural, and must have been so much less, must have been bearable in a way, "I never understood how anyone could. And now it seems so clear, almost the only possible thing to do, do you know?"

"No, I don't," Gerda had said, robust. "You *can't do that* to other people. You have no right."

"I suppose not," Kay had said, "but it doesn't feel like that."

"I shan't listen to you," Gerda had said. "Suicide can't be handed on."



But it can. Gerda knows now. She is next in line. She has flirted with lumbering lorries, a neat, dark figure launching herself blindly into the road. Once, she took a handful of pills, and waited to see if she would wake up, which she did, so on that day she continued, drowsily nauseated, to work as usual. She believes the impulse is wrong, to be resisted. But at the time it is white, and clear, and simple. The color goes from the world, so that the only stain on it is her own watching mind. Which would be easy to wipe away.

She looks at Perry Diss, who is looking at her. His eyes are half closed, his expression is canny and watchful. He has used her secret image, the white room, accurately; they have shared it. *He knows that she knows*, and, what is more, she knows that he knows. How he knows, or when he discovered, does not matter. He has had a long life. His young wife was killed in an air raid. He caused scandals, in his painting days, with his relations with models, with young, respectable girls who had not previously been models. He was the corespondent in a divorce case full of dirt and hatred and anguish. He was almost an important painter, but probably not quite. At the moment his work is out of fashion. He is hardly treated seriously. Like Gerda Himmelblau, he carries in himself some chamber of ice inside which sits his figure of pain, his version of kind Kay thick-spoken and malevolent in a hospital hospitality chair.

The middle-aged Chinese man brings a plate of orange segments. They are bright, they are glistening with juice, they are packed with little teardrop sacs full of sweetness. When Perry Diss offers her the oranges, she sees the old scars, well-made, *efficient* scars, on his wrists.

He says, "Oranges are the real fruit of paradise, I always think. Matisse was the first to understand orange, don't you agree? Orange in light, orange in shade, orange on blue, orange on green, orange on black ...

"I went to see him once, you know, after the war, when he was living in that apartment in Nice. I was full of hope in those days. I loved him and was enraged by him and meant to outdo him, some time soon, once I had just learned this and that—which I never did. I never did. He was ill then, he had come

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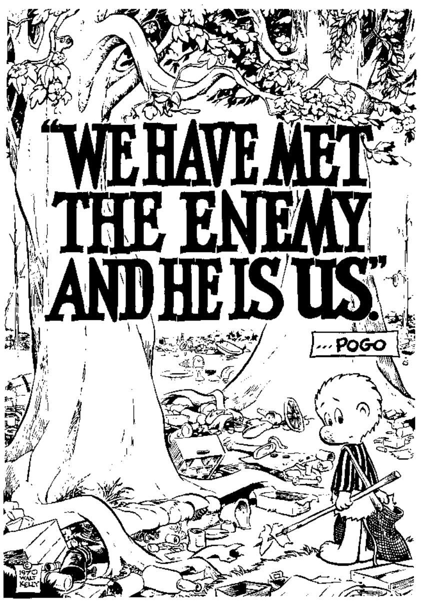
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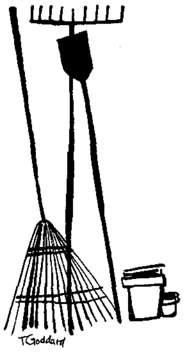
through his terrible operation, the nuns who looked after him called him *'le ressuscité.'*

"The rooms in that apartment were shrouded in darkness. The shutters were closed, the curtains were drawn. I was terribly shocked—I thought he *lived in the light*, you know, that was the idea I had of him. I blurted it out, the shock, I said, 'Oh, how can you bear to shut out the light?' And he said, quite mildly, quite courteously, that there had been some question of his going blind. He thought he had better acquaint himself with the dark. And then he added, 'And anyway, you know, black is the color of light.' Do you know the painting 'La Porte Noire'? It has a young woman in an armchair quite at ease in a peignoir striped in lemon and cadmium over a white dress—her chair is yellow-ochre and scarlet—and at the side is the window and the colored light and behind, above, is the black door. Almost no one could paint the color black as he could. Almost no one."



Gerda Himmelblau bites into her orange and tastes its sweetness. She says, "He wrote, 'I believe in God when I work.' "

"I think he also said, 'I am God when I work,' " says Perry Diss. "Perhaps he is . . . not *my* God, exactly, but the place where I find that. Do you know, I was brought up in the hope that I would be a priest. Only, I could not bear a religion that had a tortured human body hanging from the hands over its altars. No. I would rather have 'The Dance.' "

Gerda Himmelblau is gathering her things together. He continues, "That is why I meant what I said when I said that that young woman's ... muck-spreading ... offended what I called sacred. What are we to do? I don't want her to—to punish us by self-slaughter, nor do I wish to condone the violence, the absence of work."

Gerda Himmelblau sees, in her mind's eye, the face of Peggi Nollett, potato-pale, peering out of a white box with cunning, angry eyes in the slits between puffed eyelids. She sees golden oranges, rosy limbs, a voluptuously curved dark-blue violin case in a black room. One or the other must be betrayed. But, whatever she does, the bright forms will go on shining in the dark.

She says, "There is a simple solution. What she wants, what she has always wanted, what the Department has resisted, is a sympathetic supervisor—Tracey Avison, for instance—who shares her way of looking at things, whose beliefs ... who cares about political ideologies of that kind, who will—"

"Who will give her a degree and let her go on in the way she is going. It is a defeat."

"Oh, yes. It is a question of how much it matters. To you. To me. To the Department. To Peggi Nollett, too."

"It matters very much and not at all," says Perry Diss. "She may see the light. Who knows?"

They leave the restaurant together. Perry Diss thanks Dr. Himmelblau for his food and for her company. She is troubled. Something has happened to her white space, to her inner ice, which she does not quite understand. Perry Diss stops at the glass box containing the lobster, the crabs, the scallops—these last now decidedly dead, filmed with an iridescent haze of imminent putrescence. The lobster and the crabs are all still alive, all—more slowly—hissing their difficult air, bubbling, moving feet and feelers, with glazing eyes. Inside Gerda Himmelblau's ribs and cranium she experiences, in a way, the pain of alien fish-flesh contracting inside an exoskeleton. She looks at the lobster and the crabs, taking accurate, distant note of the loss of gloss, the attenuation of color.

"I find that absolutely appalling, you know," says Perry Diss. "And at the same time, at exactly the same time, I don't give a damn. D'you know?"

"I know," says Gerda Himmelblau. She does know. Cruelly, imperfectly, voluptuously, clearly. The Muzak begins again. "*Oh*, what a *beautiful mornin'*, *Oh*, what a *beautiful day*." She reaches up, in a completely uncharacteristic gesture, and kisses Perry Diss's soft cheek.

"Thank you," she says. "For everything."

"Look after yourself," says Perry Diss.

"Oh," says Gerda Himmelblau. "I will. I will." ♦

AN ECOLOGIST AT LARGE

BREAKING GROUND

by Tony Hiss

IN Mott Haven, in the southernmost—and most desperately poor—part of the South Bronx, a number of people have the idea that by planting a garden designed by schoolchildren they can dislodge a major street-corner drug-selling operation within the next year or so and in the process reclaim a small piece of the neighborhood as a safe haven for children. The garden will embrace all the open space in a double-sized city block running between St. Ann's Avenue and Brook Avenue, and between 139th Street and 141st Street (140th never having been extended through this one block). A good deal could be at stake here, for the city as much as for Mott Haven. A similar, somewhat smaller undertaking, Success Garden, which opened a year ago across from an elementary school in central Harlem, in what had been an overgrown lot roamed by crackheads and wild dogs, has already brilliantly lived up to its name. Students from an entire city public-school district hold outdoor environmental-science classes next to its new herb beds and in its new gazebo and its small orchard and its young birchwoods. The city has installed a new sidewalk in front of the garden, and this fall students will plant a line of new street trees. Success Garden itself is growing, spreading into vacant lots all around the block.

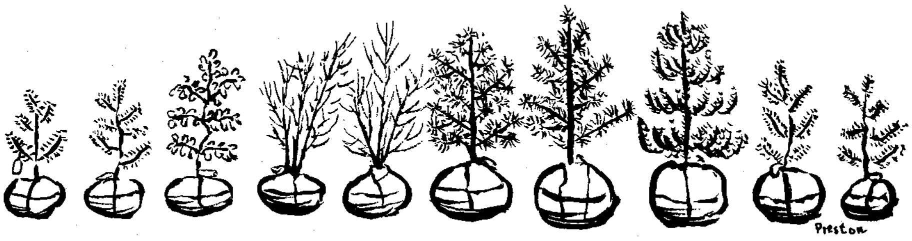
Private money paid for the garden, but the staff is paid for by a non-profit public-school fund, and its programs are paid for by the Board of Education; two other city departments, Parks and Sanitation, have quietly and repeatedly sent in crews and supplies to help out. A number of city-owned and private apartment houses and tenements up and down the block are getting new roofs and new boilers and new windows, and for the first time one building owner has been offered a homeowner's-insurance policy. Local children see that their own efforts can help change what a neighborhood looks like and what it adds up to.

Karneal Thomas, the city landscape architect who volunteered to train the children who designed Success Garden, calls it "the shape of urban parks of the future." Albert F. Appleton, the city's Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, says, "If New York has a future, this is it." Provided that the Mott Haven garden works, there are groups ready to push ahead with plans for ten more such gardens—in the Bronx, in Queens, in Harlem, and in East New York and other severely troubled Brooklyn neighborhoods.

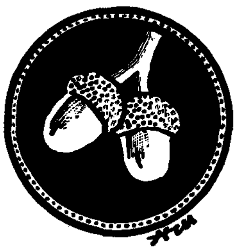
COMMUNITY gardening seems to be one of those ideas from the nineteen-sixties or seventies, like recycling and health-food stores, that have reëmerged in the nineties and are taking makeup tests. Early New York community gardens, planted back in the Flower Power, Greening-of-America days, brought beauty and bountiful harvests and renewed hope to abandoned lots all over the city, and they still do; there are perhaps eight hundred community gardens in New York—so many that they've been collectively called an alternative park system. But they've always seemed a fragile venture—an annual, not a perennial. Usually, they've been the work of some local genius; and if the genius moved, or died, or found other projects, the garden would wither. It took Joseph Pupello, a thirty-year-old parks activist, who is the director of a green-neighborhoods program for a local non-profit organization called the Parks Council, to think of anchoring community gardens to institutions that endure, such as schools or churches. But that's only Step 1. Pupello wants community gardens to have two new sources of strength—stability and a permanent upwelling of enthusiasm. So Pupello reaches out, through children, to a would-be community spirit within people—one that in frightened neighborhoods too often has no outlet. He calls what he does "switching people over from the hiding mode to the healing mode."

Another insight of Pupello's into community dynamics comes from his background: he began life in show business, as a dancer and choreographer with a strong interest in staging spectaculars and in celebrating every aspect of life. Ten years ago, Pupello, who is half Ukrainian and half Italian, founded the Manhattan Performing Ensemble, the first dance company to welcome dancers in wheelchairs into its ranks. Three years ago, he brought the same make-room-for-everybody sensibilities to the Parks Council. "Open space is the only way you can give a neighborhood a focus that's always visible from the street," he says. "A garden or a park brings all the strengths of a community out into the open."

Success Garden, one of Pupello's projects, showed eighties-hardened New Yorkers that Bambi could take on Godzilla and win. But the Mott Haven garden, another project that Pupello is right in the thick of, is far more ambitious, and this time both sides seem to have called in reinforcements. From the start, the new garden site has embraced the whole of the big block. The open space here includes a twenty-foot-tall craggy gray rock outcropping at its north end, which has never been built on; a green churchyard sloping southward below it; a flat, weedy vacant lot down at the foot of the churchyard; and, to the east of that lot, on the corner of St. Ann's and 139th, a lot that was set up some years ago as a kind of homemade neighborhood park, whose main features are a few trees and a small, dilapidated open-air shed, which now serves as a market stall for drug dealers.



Not only are both hope and fear deeply embedded in this garden site; to some extent they have intertwined. The public school on the block, P.S. 30, on 141st, just west of the gray rock, hums with discipline and striving; the hall floors gleam with fresh wax; the classrooms are silent with steady attention. It opens early, stays open late, and has adult-education programs, job counselling for parents, nutrition workshops, and clothing giveaways. Just below the crest of the rock hill sits St. Ann's Episcopal Church, a small mid-nineteenth-century country chapel built of rough stone; on its white steeple is a large picture of Jesus, laughing. St. Ann's is the resting place of Brigadier General Lewis Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and in its churchyard, which is sheltered by a giant elm and a spreading willow, is the vault of his half brother Gouverneur Morris, the man who drafted the United States Constitution, framed the religious-freedom clause in New York State's Constitution, was the father of decimal coinage in this country, and is even said to have invented the words "dollar" and "cent."



The school and the church are cosponsors of the new garden, which was designed last spring by nine P.S. 30 fifth and sixth graders working with Karneal Thomas. Two years from now, according to the plans, it will have a rock garden, a meditation garden, a vegetable garden, a science shed, a basketball court, a pond, and a fountain. An aviary is to replace the shed the drug dealers have been using.

For a number of years, the drug dealing out of this shed has been on a scale far bigger than that of any supermarket; it has been more like a drug-outlet mall, specializing in half-price heroin, although cocaine is available for freebasing. The shed has been heavily patronized in the early evening, like any other mall, by the stop-'n'-shop crowd—cars heading home to New Jersey, Connecticut, and Long Island. The Mayor's Office of Drug Abuse Policy has cited this part of the garden as one of the worst drug-selling corners in the city, both in sales volume and in the number of dealers murdered. Another worst corner is also on this block, at 139th and Brook Avenue.

If you only looked at the statistics, the neighborhood might seem to be close to flickering out of existence: the AIDS rate is frightening (at a nearby hospital, twenty-three per cent of the blood samples taken in the emergency room one night were H.I.V.-positive), and unemployment is at sixty per cent. At least a third of what economic activity does take place is drug-related; one drug lord, who was assassinated last spring, was referred to in the neighborhood as "our I.B.M. plant," because he had almost two hundred people on his payroll. Small-time drug dealers stay sharp by test-firing machine guns on the roofs of local tenements, shooting into the sky. "Death is all around us," Aida Rosa, the principal of P.S. 30, says.

At the same time, Mott Haven is the first home in the United States for some of New York's most recent arrivals—Mexicans, Hondurans, Salvadorans. "I think of it as a place where the American Revolution is happening every day," Father Luis Barrios, the priest in charge of St. Ann's, says. A daytime walk through these blocks uncovers a complicated and, to an outsider, often puzzling neighborhood. There are signs of health and of ordinariness here—some new housing, several tenements being rehabbed. Every shop on 138th Street, the local commercial strip, is open for business and is full of people. Yet some of this ordinariness seems strangely out of place; for instance, there is a large and busy supermarket between 138th and 139th on St. Ann's, catercorner from the drug dealers. And the same kind of strangeness surrounds people's thinking about George Calderon, the murdered drug lord: he is remembered positively by quite a few for hiring women, for giving his workers paid vacations and taking care of their hospital bills, for allowing a needle-exchange program to operate on his corner, and for refusing to sell crack, because, he said, crack destroyed neighborhoods.

THERE are moments in any area when an entire community seems to hold its breath, waiting to see what will happen next, or what it's still capable of. Such a moment was the groundbreaking the other day for the new Mott Haven garden, held at noon outdoors on what had been drug dealers' turf—and was again later that afternoon, immediately after the ceremony ended. A chorus of thirteen children from P.S. 30, in blue dresses or blue shirts and pants, lined up in front of two hundred people and sang "Imagine." In the main speech, their principal, Mrs. Rosa, said, "We're all just seeds. Can we grow?" Drug dealers, the best-dressed people on hand, prowled the back of the crowd, occasionally uttering hostile remarks: "You're just making us a prettier place we can sell in," and "Whatever you build, we'll tear down."

Behind the crowd at the groundbreaking stood two steel poles. A year and a half ago, a community group, acting on its own, had tried to fence off the site. Drug dealers beat up the members of the fence crew, and the crew abandoned the job after putting in those first two poles. And now, above the crowd, hanging from the boughs of a few scraggly trees, were more than a dozen dirty Teddy bears and broken dolls. They were originally put there by a local sculptor in remembrance of a friend who had died from drugs. But the sculptor moved on, and the Teddy bears now serve as memorials to murdered drug sellers, and are guarded by the survivors. They've also become a kind of business trademark, like a pawnbroker's gold balls. Sometimes the police cut them down, but they're always replaced within a day.

Next month, the new gardeners will have a police escort when they put up a ten-foot-high steel fence around the garden site. According to Ralph Mosca, a Police Department community-service officer who patrols the neighborhood, there are at least some positive feelings about the new garden among the drug dealers: two young dealers who grew up on the block volunteered to help him sweep the sidewalk before the groundbreaking. Those two dealers told me last week that they thought neighborhood kids deserved to have a place all their own. Mosca thinks that if enough explaining and advance work is done in the community this month the garden will have no opposition. But maybe next month's new fence-raising will be an occasion when the whole city feels itself holding its breath. ♦

The Best of Britain

London Pictures Service

Mike Caldwell/Tony Stone Worldwide

Clockwise from above: *Scotland's Isle of Mull; a craftsman at work in the National Gallery; Yeoman Warders stand guard at the Tower of London; a balloon fiesta at Leeds Castle.*

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With its rich history, age-old traditions, and its cultural and literary excellence, Britain holds a place of distinction for American travellers. Those in search of ancestral roots or simply a land where civility and elegance still reign will discover a fascinating legacy in Shakespeare's sceptered isle.

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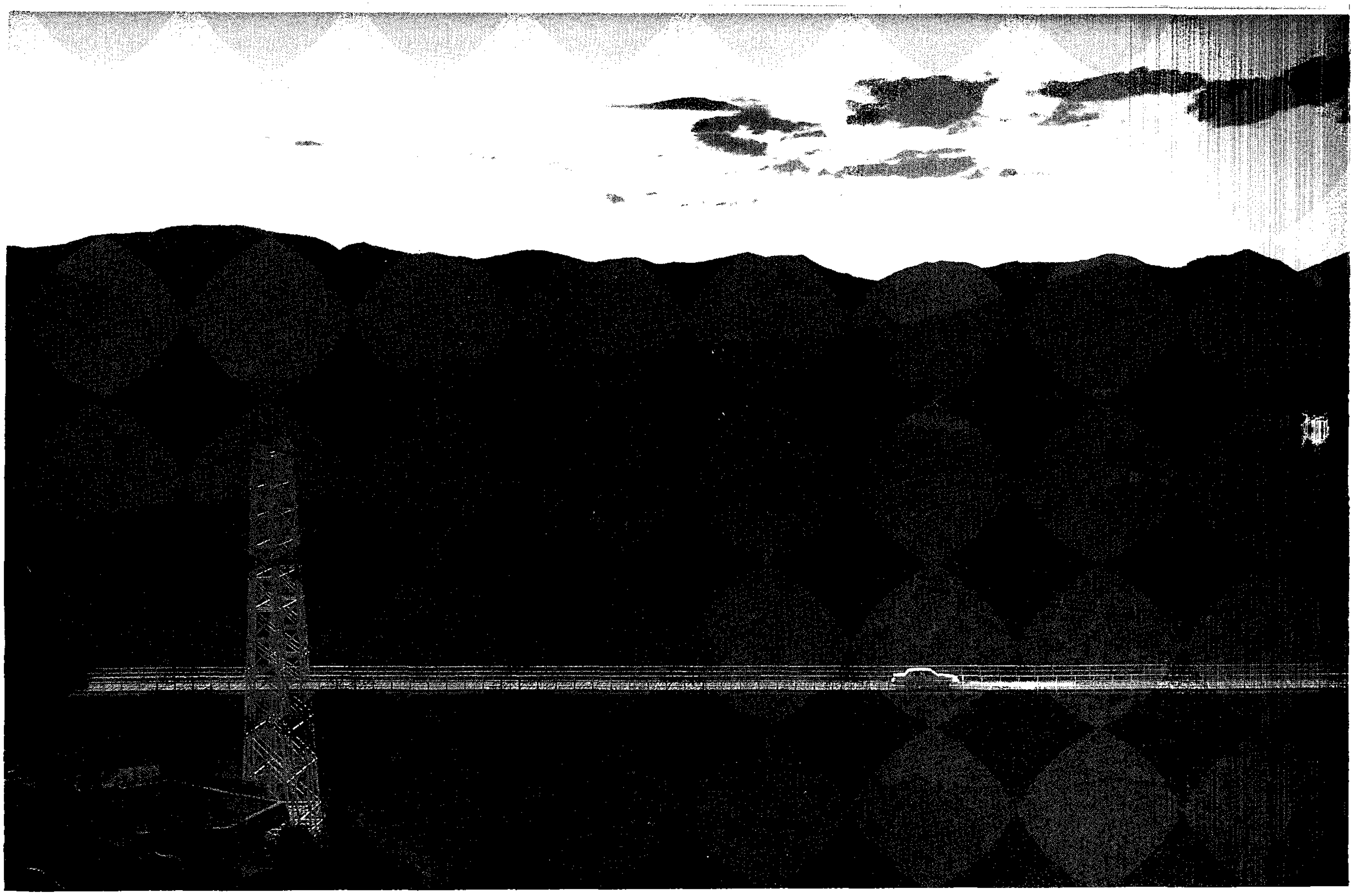
Ian Gill/Tony Stone Worldwide



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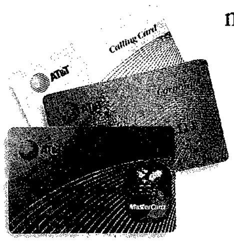

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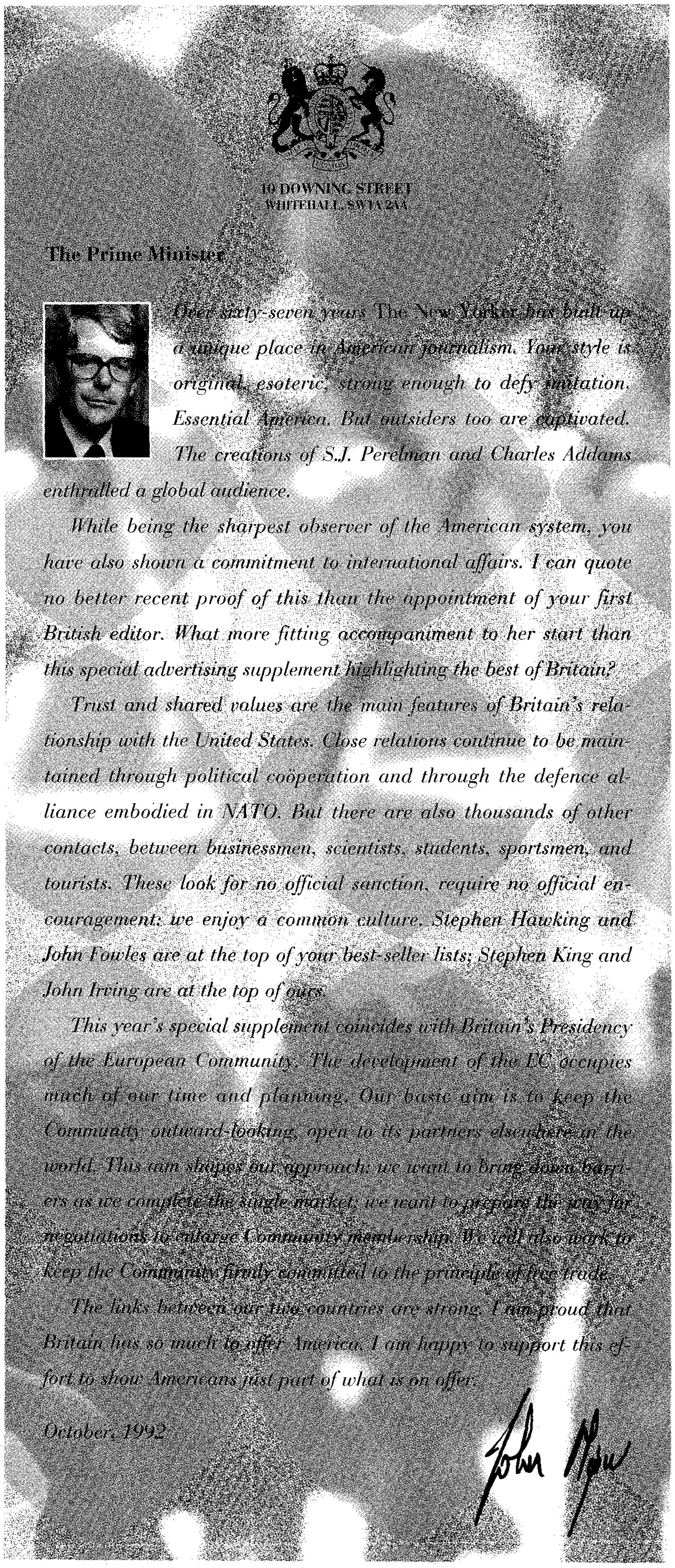
London and its Environs

Vibrant London steps to a brisk modern pace, while still holding on to ancient traditions. Pomp and pageantry — from the Changing of the Guard to the bright costumes of Yeoman Warders — are cherished trademarks of daily life. But this metropolis is also a world financial center dwelling at the vanguard of technological innovation, design, and entertainment.

The old and the new respectfully salute each other in London, with traditional and contemporary architecture embracing the vast skyline. St. Paul's Cathedral, the seventeenth-century architectural showpiece of Sir Christopher Wren, and the futuristic Lloyd's of London building both rise above the City. A bus ride along the Thames al-

Doug Armand/Tony Stone Worldwide

The Lloyd's of London headquarters is a striking example of contemporary architecture.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The Prime Minister

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This year's special supplement coincides with Britain's Presidency of the European Community. The development of the EC occupies much of our time and planning. Our basic aim is to keep the Community outward-looking, open to its partners elsewhere in the world. This aim shapes our approach: we want to bring down barriers as we complete the single market; we want to prepare the way for negotiations to enlarge Community membership. We will also work to keep the Community firmly committed to the principle of free trade.

The links between our two countries are strong. I am proud that Britain has so much to offer America. I am happy to support this effort to show Americans just part of what is on offer.

October, 1992

John Major

Tony Stone Worldwide

Although there are many theories about the monument, it is still unclear why Stonehenge was built.

lows a startling view of the burgeoning waterfront developments.

A sophisticated young spirit prevails over Covent Garden's shops and galleries, all adjacent to the Royal Opera House, while eclectic Soho and the West End encompass the elegant shops of Bond Street and the gaudy sights of Piccadilly Circus. Here, London's theatre life, indisputably the world's best, still reigns supreme.

Guardian of the city's heritage, the Tower of London holds the Coronation Crown, robes, and the imperial mantles of past sovereigns. Matters of state are debated in the imposing Houses of Parliament, while the tombs of kings — and poets — occupy nearby Westminster Abbey. Adjacent to St. James's Park is Buckingham Palace, over which the Royal Standard flies when The Queen is home.

To glimpse the art treasures of the public domain, head for the National Gallery. The Museum of the Moving Image on the South Bank offers entertaining hands-on displays of film and television-making processes, and the venerable British Museum houses antiquities from the Rosetta Stone to the Elgin Marbles. Treasures of a different kind are seen at Madame Tussaud's on Marylebone Road.

The Docklands area of the East End has been exuberantly restored into a prosperous business and residential neighborhood. Don't overlook the Design Museum at Butler's Wharf, or the historic ship collection at St. Katharine Dock.

London's environs are equally fascinating. Wander in the horticultural maze at Hampton Court Palace or the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. See the splendid clipper ship *Cutty Sark* in Greenwich or the enchanting Queen Mary's Doll's House at Windsor Castle.

The West Country

Stretching languidly from Salisbury Plain to Penzance, the west is steeped in history and legend. The region encompasses nearly 650 miles of coastline, from the rugged cliffs of Cornwall to the palm-fringed bays of the Devon coast.

The remote Cornwall peninsula is an ancient Celtic homeland where King Arthur and his knights are believed to have lived in a clifftop castle at Tintagel. The gaunt shell still stands in this distant coastal village. Today, Cornwall's rocky coastline is dotted with popular domestic resorts such as Newquay and St. Ives.

Devon also has a mystical quality, with a wild and varied landscape. Visit its two national parks: haunting Dartmoor with its granite tors and sweeping moorland, and Exmoor with its soft, undulating beauty. Legacies of the past are seen in the city of Exeter, with its eleventh-century Norman cathedral towers and Saxon guildhall.

Inland is rural Wiltshire, with Britain's most celebrated prehistoric monument — four-thousand-year-old Stonehenge. Wiltshire's stately homes also merit a visit. Acre-upon-acre of landscaped gardens surround Stourhead House, while a safari park accents the grand Longleat House. The magnificent Double and Single Cube Rooms of Wilton House are treasures of interior design.

Bath, the oldest and most famous spa town, is a jewel of a city. Founded two thousand years ago by the Romans, it still has the natural hot springs and remains of the Roman baths. The city's Georgian architecture is at its best in the Assembly Rooms and the Royal Crescent.

The South

With stylish resorts and gracious manor homes, the literary towns of the Weald, and medieval inns along Pilgrim's Way, the south is a region of splendid diversity. Its rich, green landscape and picturesque hamlets were favored by writers such as Henry James and Virginia Woolf.

Kent is the garden of England, a glorious countryside of orchards, vineyards, and hops fields, with the gently rolling downs. Winston Churchill established his country retreat at Chartwell Manor, while the ill-fated Anne Boleyn dwelled in the idyllic, moated Hever Castle near Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Julian Calder/Tony Stone Worldwide

Today, Covent Garden, with its elegant shopping arcade, is one of London's most appealing areas.

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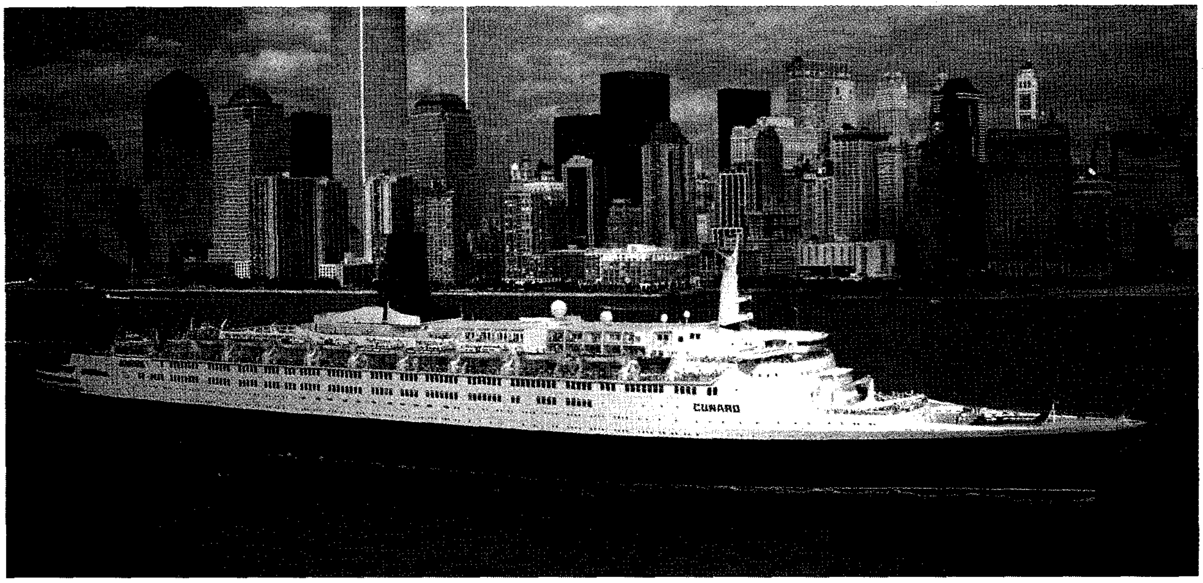

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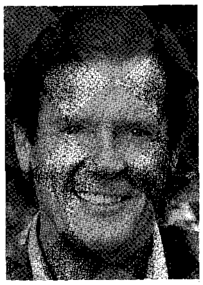

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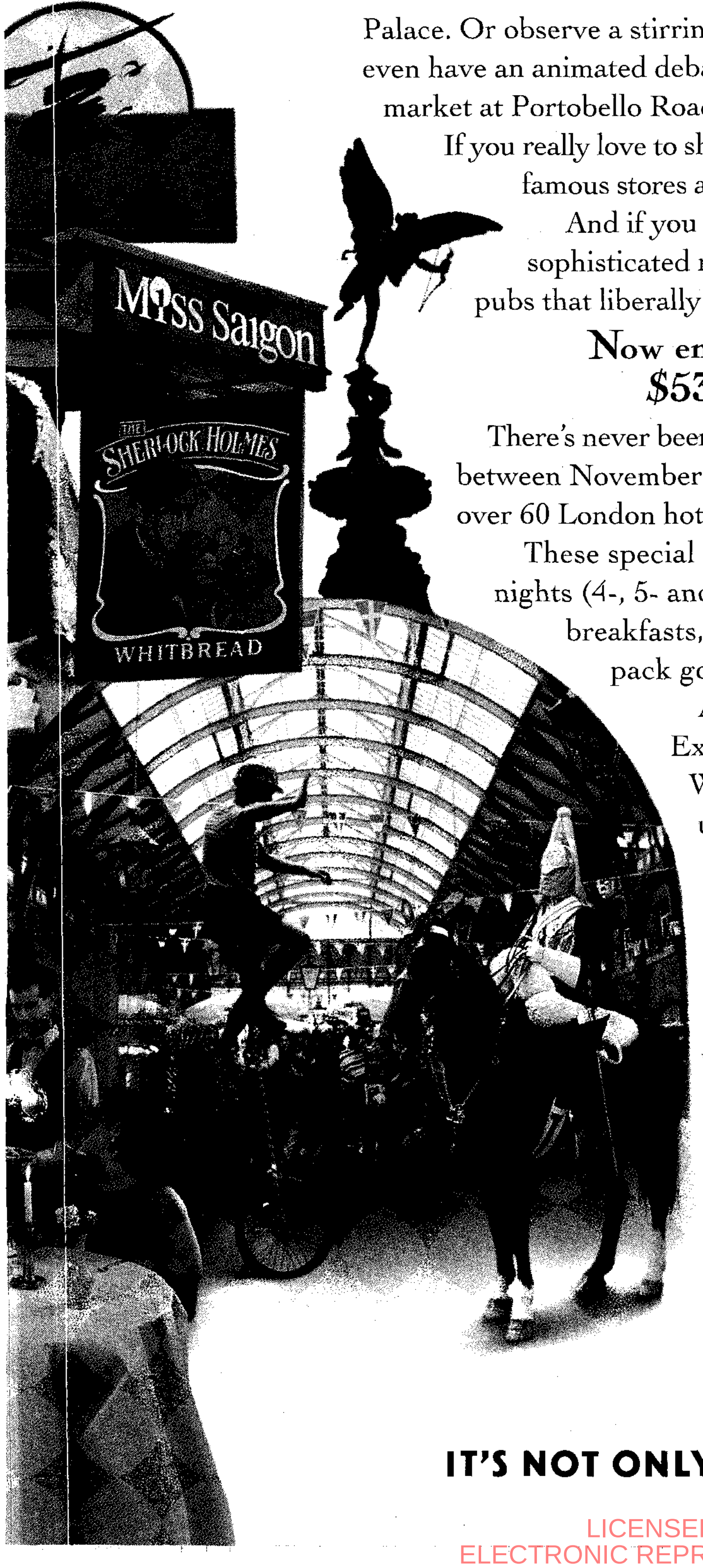

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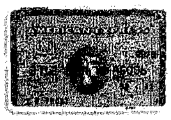

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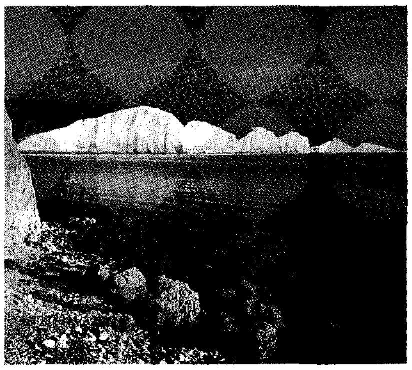
Writer Vita Sackville-West saw "a garden crying out for rescue" at Sissinghurst Castle, and later restored it as one of Britain's finest horticultural gems. Leeds Castle near Maidstone is set on two small islands in a lake.

In Hampshire is Broadlands, stately residence of the late Lord Mountbatten and honeymoon spot of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. Near the pretty village of Beaulieu, are the remains of England's largest Cistercian abbey, as well as the National Motor Museum, with more than 250 classic cars, buses, and motorcycles.

The city of Winchester is the ancient capital of England and among the most historic of English cities. Huge Winchester Cathedral towers over it, and King Arthur's legendary Round Table hangs in the Great Hall. While in the south, spend a day strolling the promenade at the stylish seaside resort of Brighton and explore the exotic interiors of the Royal Pavilion, King George IV's fantasy home. Soak up the atmosphere of Canterbury and its famous cathedral, the final destination of Chaucer's fourteenth-century pilgrims.

As Britain's gateway since Roman times, Dover is flanked by the famous white cliffs and imposing medieval castle. Make a side trip to nearby Folkestone and the exciting Eurotunnel Exhibition Centre with a full-sized shuttle interior model and an observation tower for the tunnel site, which will open by the fall of 1993.



Oliver Benn/Tony Stone Worldwide

Dover's Seven Sisters coastline is a much-celebrated attraction of England.

Central England

From the gentle Cotswold Hills to the rugged Peak District, the heart of England embraces some of the finest countryside in the nation.

William Shakespeare drew inspiration for his work from the lush green area around his birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon. From the Forest of Arden, timbers were hewn into the buildings of this market town. Five beautifully preserved properties associated with the bard, including the cottage of his wife, Anne Hathaway, are open to view. While visiting the town, see an incomparable performance of the Royal Shakespeare Company at one of the three theatres.

Tony Stone Worldwide

In Oxford, rowing crews practice on the River Thames at dawn.

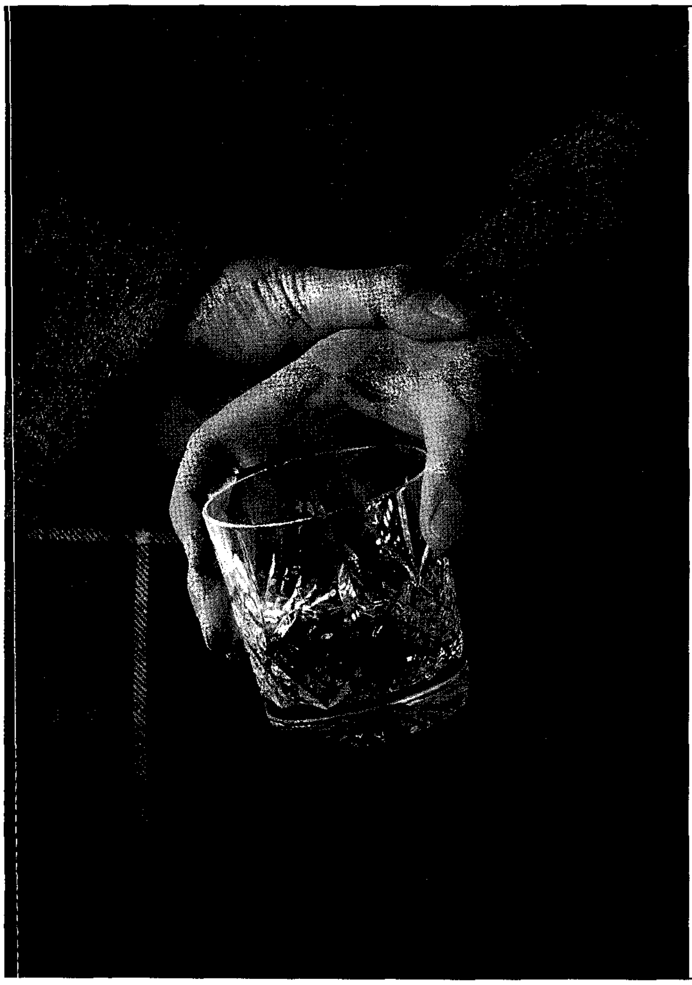
Oxford, known as the "City of Dreaming Spires," with its eight-hundred-year-old university and the hushed cloisters of academia, is a must for visitors. Beyond the coaching inns of tiny Woodstock looms mighty Blenheim Palace. Its sublime parks were designed by Capability Brown. The home of the Marlboroughs also wins renown as the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. To the east lies Woburn Abbey and the State Rooms of Queen Victoria.

In the north is Birmingham and the "Black Country" with its echoes of the Industrial Revolution. Ride a boat through the Dudley Tunnel to limestone quarries at the Black Country Museum, or examine the working replica of an early steam engine. The Ironbridge Gorge Museum in Shropshire comprises six working sites that preserve in situ the remains of early industrial activity in the Severn Valley.

Stoke-on-Trent is home to the Potteries, the world's most famous china manufacturers. Tour factories where exquisite tableware is created by skilled potters and decorators. Other fascinating stops include the Gladstone Pottery Museum in nearby Longton, the Bass Museum in Burton-upon-Trent, and crystal glassware factories in Stourbridge.

East Anglia and the Fens

The undulating farmlands, haunting fens and waterways of East Anglia are an



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Colin Raw/Tony Stone Worldwide

Northern England is a region of open spaces and wide horizons.

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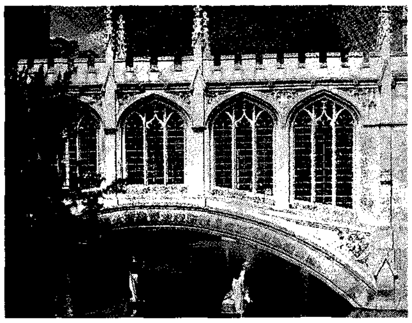
East Anglia contains England's oldest town, Colchester, and its second oldest university, Cambridge. Superb Gothic cathedrals are seen in Peterborough and Ely. In Norfolk, the River Ouse wends through the fen flatlands, flanked by small market towns.

Expansive and timeless, Suffolk has a mysterious quality that has inspired landscape artists like John Constable. The buildings in villages such as Stratford St. Mary, East Bergholt, and Dedham are recognizable in his paintings. While here, explore tiny villages that once revolved around the wool trade. The town of Lavenham, with its pink-walled buildings and guildhall, is the most famous. The largest, Sudbury, is set on a loop of the River Stour.

Visit Ipswich, a major trading port, and stay at the famous coaching inn of Admiral Lord Nelson. Seaside Aldeburgh is home to writers and artists, as well as one of England's most famous music festivals. Bury St. Edmunds, "the nicest town in the world," according to writer William Cobbett, is in Central Suffolk. It exudes Georgian elegance and has the ruins of a great abbey.



Joe Cornish/Tony Stone Worldwide

At St. John's College, Cambridge, travellers pass under the legendary Bridge of Sighs.

Peaceful countryside and inland waterways dominate Norfolk. Spend a day in handsome Norwich, with its Norman cathedral, nine-hundred-year-old marketplace, and Elm Hill — once the center of the weaving industry. From the nearby busy port of King's Lynn, make an excursion to Sandringham House, country home of the Royal Family.

The North of England

The Yorkshire Moors, rugged coastline, and glaciated lakelands of Northern England have inspired writers from the Brontë sisters to James Herriot. The poet William Wordsworth described the Lake District, which dwells majestically in this region, as "sublime and beautiful."

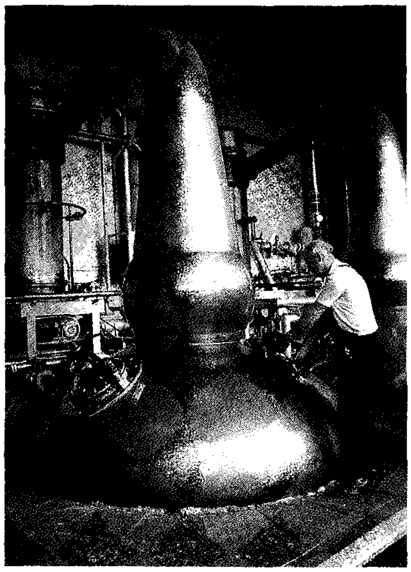
Romantic castle ruins and extravagant country houses are found in the far reaches of Yorkshire and Humberside. Here are the rocky uplands of the Yorkshire Dales and heather-clad tops of the North York Moors. To the west are the Pennine Hills, often called the "backbone of England."

Medieval York was the former Anglo-Saxon and Viking capital of England. Stroll atop its thirteenth-century walls or along the narrow winding streets of the Shambles. The York Minster, England's largest cathedral, is a Gothic masterpiece. Visit the Castle Museum with its period rooms and eighteenth-century water mill. Learn the history of the railways and see more than fifty steam locomotives at the National Railway Museum.

The majestic abbeys of Fountains, Rievaulx, and Jervaulx are also found in this region, as well as stately homes like Harewood House, with interiors by Robert Adam, and Castle Howard, the setting for the television series "Brideshead Revisited." Durham is renowned for its nine-hundred-year-old Norman cathedral. At the nearby Beamish Open-Air Museum, life at a coal mining village is recreated.

Scotland

An air of mystery and magic pervades the dramatic Highlands and shining lochs of Britain's northernmost country, a land shaped by an intriguing history.



Marcus Brooke/Tony Stone Worldwide

A man works at the copper stills in the Glenronach Distillery

Most familiar are the haunting tunes of bagpipes and bright tartans of Highland dancers. Signs of the past are seen in ancient fortresses such as Dunnottar or historic houses such as Brodie. Stirling Castle was the coronation site of Mary, Queen of Scots, while Balmoral Castle, built by

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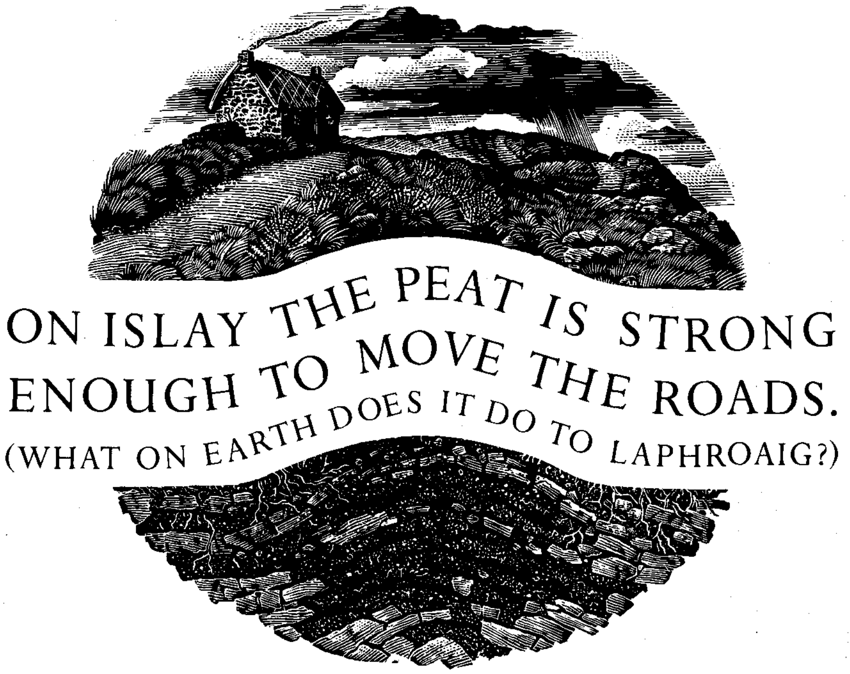
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Queen Victoria, is the summer retreat of the Royal Family.

The capital, history-laden Edinburgh, is dominated by its castle. Wander through the city's medieval streets along the Royal Mile to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, or visit New Town, with its eighteenth-century Georgian architecture.

Glasgow is a dynamic cultural center and home to the Scottish Opera as well as the National Orchestra. Linger in its art galleries, museums, and friendly pubs.

Solitude and beauty are found on the romantic Isle of Skye and the Isle of Mull, site of the summer musical gatherings, or "ceilidhs." From the Isles of Lewis and Harris come the famous quality tweeds, while the Shetland Islands are known for their jumpers and famous ponies.

Scotland's industrial past is reflected in its many distilleries and woollen mills, as well as crystal factories. In the Scottish Borders are towns devoted to producing traditional knitwear, tartans, and woven garments. Visit the shops, mills, and museums revolving around the industry in twelve towns along the Scottish Borders Woollen Trail.

The ancient whisky-making process and tastings can be experienced at distilleries in Scotland. Set high in the Grampian Highlands, the seventy-mile Malt Whisky Trail encompasses eight distilleries, with guided tours at centers such as Cardhu, Glenlivet, and Glenfarclas.

The sounds of the Highland Pipers fill the air in Scotland.

A. Milliken/Tony Stone Worldwide

Wales

This tiny principality — known as "Cymru" in Welsh — has a distinct culture and history, along with one of Europe's oldest languages. Curiously, Wales also shares the monarch, government, and language of England.

Its landscape spans six thousand years of history, from its prehistoric standing stones to mighty castle fortresses. In the north is rugged Snowdonia National Park, "Land of the Eagle." In southern Wales, rolling moorlands dominate Brecon Beacons National Park, while Pembrokeshire Coast National Park has a wild, rugged seascape.

Enchanting medieval castles dot the Welsh landscape. The four most noteworthy in Northern Wales — Harlech Castle, perched high above the sea in Snowdonia; Conwy, with its impressive Great Hall; the mammoth Caernarfon; and the concentrically designed Beaumaris — were built seven hundred years ago by King Edward I

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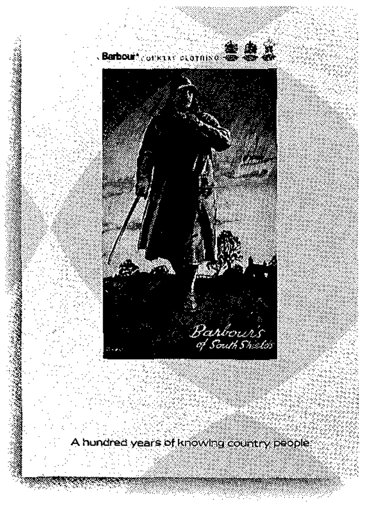
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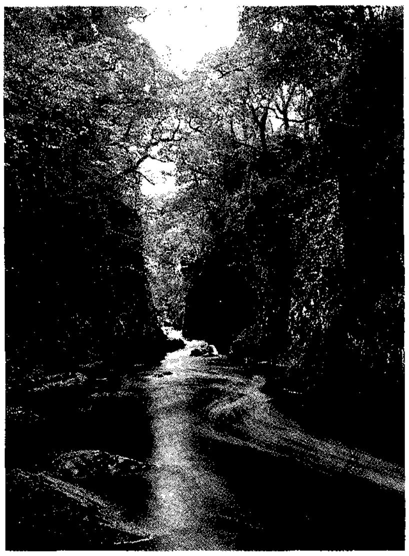
of England. Pembroke Castle on the south coast is one of Wale's finest, while Powis in mid-Wales has unique terraced gardens.


David Woodfall/Tony Stone Worldwide

Snowdonia National Park, Wales, displays the region's most breathtaking natural scenery.

Cardiff is the modest but elegant capital, home to Cardiff Castle, the National Museum of Wales, the open-air Welsh Folk Museum, and a famous rugby field. In the west is the smallest cathedral city in Britain, St. David's. While there, explore the unique Bishop's Palace, with its arcaded parapet, or the cathedral and its twelfth-century nave.

Wales's industrial life revolved around its slate and coal mines, iron and steel works, and woollen mills. Though most mines and quarries have closed, visits can be made to the original sites. Observe the technique for mining slate by candlelight as it was done in the Victorian era at the Llechwedd Slate Caverns and Deep Mine in Blaenau Ffestiniog near Snowdonia. Visit the Welsh Slate Museum at Llanberis, or the Museum of the Welsh Woollen Industry in Cardiff.

Interestingly, the narrow-gauge steam railways once used to transport materials from the mines have been preserved with the old locomotives. Take a nostalgic trip through spectacular scenery on one of the "Great Little Trains of Wales," along the Talyllyn or Ffestiniog Railways.

Shelley Bance is a free-lance travel writer and editor based in New York.

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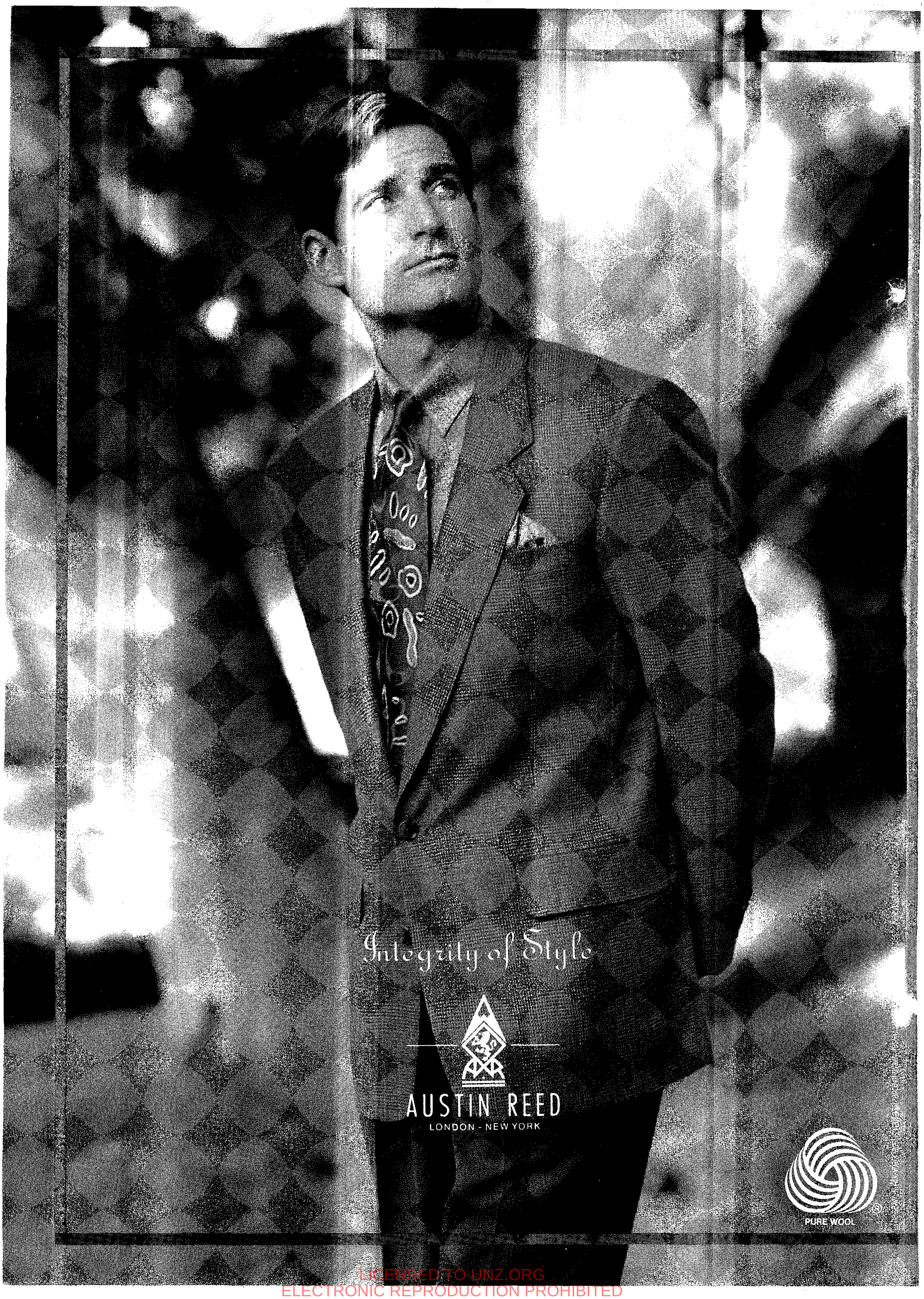
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THE CRITICS

JAZZ

THE REAL JELLY ROLL

by Whitney Balliett

Bringing it all back home: Vernel Bagneris.

DAVID KATZENSTEIN

POOR Jelly Roll Morton! The indomitable, pioneering American composer, pianist, and bandleader is being commemorated on the centennial of his birth not with a postage stamp or a medal but with George C. Wolfe's spurious Broadway musical "Jelly's Last Jam." Help, though, has arrived at Michael's Pub, where the luminous New Orleans actor and playwright Vernel Bagneris (pronounced Bahnereez) and the virtuoso Norwegian pianist Morten Gunnar Larsen are putting on a brilliant two-man show called "Jelly Roll Morton: A Me-morial." But Wolfe's show first. It revolves around a black dancer named Jelly Roll Morton, who is a Scrooge in Creole clothing. (The musical repeatedly echoes "A Christmas Carol.") This Morton is a greedy, hypocritical bully, and also a light-skinned racist, who "denies the black soil from which the rhythm [of jazz] was born," and who, late in the evening, says angrily, "There ain't no coon stock in this Creole." Change the lead's name in "Jelly's Last Jam" to, say, Bill Robinson, and it becomes clear what the show really is—an experimental study, done within a traditional Broadway-musical framework, of the life and death of a black misanthrope. In short, a psychomusical.

Morton's real outlines, though, are constantly suggested onstage, and anyone who knows something about his life will find it impossible not to keep comparing his ghost with Wolfe's monster. Wolfe says that Morton was a Creole. Strictly speaking, he was a Creole of color, or a café au lait, as they were once called—a partial descendant of the original Creoles, who were French-speaking white aristocrats of the early nineteenth century. Wolfe changes Morton, one of the great jazz pianists, into a tap dancer—presumably because Gregory Hines, who plays Morton, is a star. And Wolfe makes Morton a contemptible racist, even though Morton invariably hired black musicians, and none ever suggested he was a bigot. (To be sure, Morton, acutely aware of his own worth, *was* arrogant, and sometimes displayed the so-called New Orleans evil—a red-eyed paranoia that seized all New Orleans musicians when they imagined they had been slighted or insulted.)

But the worst of Wolfe's distortions in "Jelly's Last Jam" involve Morton's music. Apparently believing that it was not "black" enough or emotional enough, he hired the run-of-the-mill arranger-composer Luther Henderson to write a homogenized "modern" score. The result is a tasteless stew on which float largely unrecognizable bits and pieces of Morton compositions. Morton's greatest records, made in Chicago in 1926 and 1927, are elegant, driving examples of polyphonic jazz. They prefigure Duke Ellington, yet celebrate the old free-for-all New Orleans ensemble music. Balancing elation and sorrow, humor and pomp, the blues and ragtime, they are as "black" as jazz got at the time.

The real Jelly Roll Morton could have been the hero of a wonderful musical. He was funny, preposterous, wild, mischievous, and immensely gifted. Born around 1890 in New Orleans, Morton left home in his teens and spent most of his life on the road. He liked money, women, clothes, and comfort, and he was a swell. Although Morton's music eventually became paramount in his life, he also made his living as a pimp, a bellhop, a tailor, a cardsharp, a pool player, a peddler, a minstrel, a night-club manager, and a fight promoter. One of his earliest inspirations was peddling Coca-Cola laced with salt as a cure for consumption. He was a tireless braggart. (Publicity agents did not exist then, of course; show-business people—particularly black ones—had to

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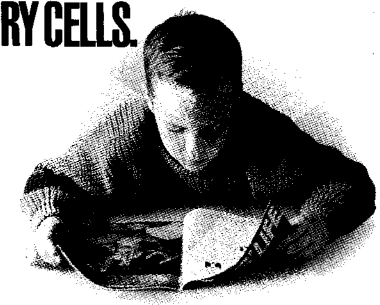

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blow their own horns.) One afternoon in 1940, a year before he died, he went to a Hot Lips Page rehearsal in New York, and he asked Page what style his band was playing in. Page said Kansas City style, and Morton replied, "Kansas City style, Chicago style, New Orleans style, hell, they are all Jelly Roll style!" In a famous letter to *down beat*, written in the late thirties to counter an assertion made on a radio program that W. C. Handy invented jazz, he declared, "I guess I am one hundred years ahead of my time." Morton belongs in that curious American pantheon of tall-tale heroes, alongside Paul Bunyan and Davy Crockett and Johnny Appleseed.

IN the spring of 1938, the folklorist Alan Lomax, alerted by a jazz fan to the fact that Morton was playing in Washington, invited him to the Library of Congress to talk about his life. Lomax set up a portable recording machine in the Coolidge Auditorium and sat Morton down at a grand piano and asked him questions. At intervals over the next few weeks, Morton talked and sang and played into Lomax's microphone, and the results form one of the great American autobiographies, or novels. Lomax fashioned a book out of the recordings, called "Mister Jelly Roll." Unaccountably, the Library has never issued the tapes, but independently produced sets have appeared from time to time. Vernel Bagneris and Morten Larsen Michael have based their show wholly on Morton's own words and music.

LARSEN opens the evening at Michael's Pub with Morton's "Sporting House Rag," and Bagneris, standing in the dark at the back of the house, intones the opening words from the Library of Congress recordings: "As I can understand it, all my folks were in the city of New Orleans long before the Louisiana Purchase, and they came directly from the shores of France." Dressed in a natty royal-blue chalk-stripe suit and matching cap, Bagneris materializes onstage, looking uncannily like Morton, and establishes his hauteur by telling us that his family often took him to the opera, where he heard "Il Trovatore." Larsen plays an excerpt from the opera straight, then jazzes it up, Morton fashion, and we learn how Morton went about inventing jazz. Bagneris, who has a light, lissome baritone, then sings "Mister Jelly Lord," a funny self-tribute song by Morton ("The man's an angel with great big feet"), and begins a story about how Morton beat one Aaron Harris at pool, not knowing that Harris had killed eleven people, including his sister and brother-in-law. A lovely blues follows, and Bagneris sits down and smokes a cigarillo while Larsen plays Morton's "Pep." Bagneris sings "Winin' Boy" and, during a Larsen chorus, goes into the first of half a dozen casual, sinuous dances. They illustrate Morton's music. The old Harlem dancer Pepsi Bethel helped Bagneris with the choreography, and his steps, done on air and in a kind of slow motion, are full of bent knees, fast side shuffles, pecking motions, pedalling, spins, and hip undulations, and they echo such dances as the Chicken, the Shimmy, the Eagle Rock, the Jig Walk, the Suzy-Q, and the Shorty George.

By now, Bagneris *is* Morton and, his voice low and amused, he demonstrates how, on arriving in a new town, he would don a fancy suit and strut casually down the main street, collecting admiring female glances, retire, put on another dazzling suit, and repeat his walk, telling his admirers that he could change his suit several times a day for a month and never wear the same one twice. The songs and dances and stories slide beautifully by, and Bagneris ends the evening by reading Morton's obituary from *down beat* and by singing his mournful "Sweet Substitute," a touching example of Morton's occasional attempts to write pop songs. Midway in the show, Bagneris puts on a tattersall vest and tan trousers, and, while he's changing, Larsen plays Morton's astonishing "Fingerbreaker," a roaring up-tempo display piece with a rocketing left hand and shouldering right-hand chords. (Morton used the piece to blow away other pianists; it's not surprising that the Harlem stride pianists didn't care for him.) The piano never rests in Bagneris's show. We hear Morton's lacy, cluttered pieces; his direct, down blues; his volcanic fast numbers, and his rhythmic surprises, which trip you no matter how often you hear them.

In less than an hour, Bagneris, with Larsen's indispensable help, creates a subtle, funny, graceful, haunting portrait of Morton, which makes "Jelly's Last Jam" seem crass and ugly. But the show at Michael's Pub should be longer. Bagneris puts us on Morton's right, and it's not easy to leave so soon. ♦

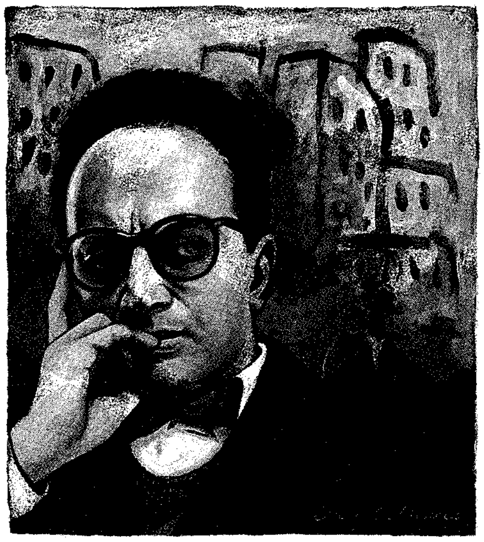
THE THEATRE

WAITING FOR ODETS

by John Lahr

IN Chicago, a ragged man stood on the corner of North Halstead and Willow, down the street from the new, five-hundred-seat Steppenwolf Theatre, where Clifford Odets' first full-length play, "Awake and Sing!" (1935), was being revived. It was late. The street was empty. The man shuffled in laceless sneakers to keep warm. He held out a paper cup and jiggled it. The next day, Chicago's famous Schwinn Bicycle Company filed for bankruptcy. Over the decade, Chicago's manufacturing-job base has shrunk from thirty per cent to less than twenty per cent, and despite the prosperous shine of downtown's Miracle Mile things aren't good for the immigrants who built the city: they can no longer count on factory work as their gateway into society. It was Odets who said, "A job is a home to a homeless man," and it is Odets who, fifty-eight years after he bushwhacked his way into the American consciousness with his agit-prop one-acter, "Waiting for Lefty," still speaks to that sense of stalled blessing which haunts the land.

According to Odets, the fundamental activity of the characters in "Awake and Sing!" is the "struggle for life amidst petty conditions"—an activity that has again come to preoccupy a distressingly large number of Americans. Except for David Mamet, Odets is the only American writer to put low life as well as high life on the stage with a crackling poetic authenticity that encompasses what he called "the American gallery," which "remains uncelebrated and unexpressed." For decades, critics have been trying to write off Odets as "dated"; this is a bias long held by the *Times*, and it's why New Yorkers have been almost entirely deprived of his voice since 1984. But to call Odets dated is to see only the surface of his nineteen-thirties dramatic conventions, and not the depth of his perceptions about character, language, and the punishing waste of spirit in democracy's obsession with success, which he once called "the peritonitis of the soul." All drama is by definition "dated," the product of a particular moment, and, as Odets' friend and original director, Harold Clurman, once remarked, "we do not dismiss Homer's epic because wars are no longer engaged in over a beautiful girl." History, however, has dealt society a wild card, and now, perhaps for the first time since the Depression, Odets' vision and his craft can be seen for what they are. Even in a production like Steppenwolf's, which gets as close to the rumble of panic under the play as Ponce de León did to the Fountain of Youth, Odets' big, brave voice has important things to tell us, about then and now.



Clifford Odets: Dubbed the new O'Neill, he became the spokesman of the thirties.

PAUL DAVIS

"Here without a dollar you don't look the world in the eye. Talk from now to next year—this is life in America." So says Bessie Berger, the matriarch of Odets' Bronx family, who knows in her own way what Veblen meant about America when he said, "Esteem is awarded on evidence." In a capitalist society, that evidence is a show of wealth. Odets' accomplishment is to create a climate of humiliation which settles in around the Berger household like a thick

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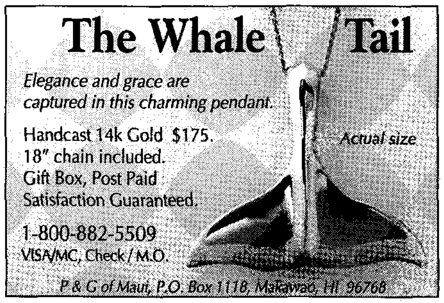

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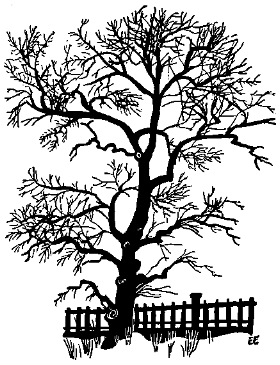
fog. "I could die from shame," Bessie says of her son Ralph's girlfriend—to her, a "nobody." The judgmental eye of others—the scorn of the winners in a competitive society—is what terrifies Bessie and turns her into a termagant of manipulation. She forces her pregnant daughter, Hennie, into a loveless marriage with a newly arrived immigrant; she puts the kibosh on Ralph's friends ("I don't like my boy to be seen with those tramps") and his girlfriend; she even contrives to cheat Ralph out of some insurance money, only to explain when she's caught, "Ralphie, I worked too hard all my years to be treated like dirt." Bessie's house is spotless; what's soiling is the demands and disregard of the world. It's not just Bessie's soul that shrivels. The entire household is debased in various ways by economic necessity. Her husband, Myron ("He is heartbroken without being aware of it," the stage direction says), studied law but has spent his life in haberdashery. He retreats into nostalgia and badinage. "My scalp is impoverished," he says, referring to his bald pate, but his emptiness is more than skin deep. Bessie's father, Jacob, has retreated into utopian fantasies of a better world, and her moneyed brother, Morty, to whom life is "hot delicatessen," displays a smug indifference to others. His defense against humiliation is a success that humiliates them. In contrast to Morty's self-aggrandizement is the self-loathing of Hennie's sad-sack husband, Sam Feinschreiber. Failure, as Odets joked in another play, has gone to his head. He craves the invisibility of the shamed. According to the stage direction, Sam is "conditioned by the humiliation of not making his way alone." He spells it out, in a confession made all the more humiliating because nobody seems to care. "To my worst enemy I don't wish such a life," says Sam, who pleads to Hennie for her love and is rejected before our eyes. "Nobody likes me."



"When one lives in the jungle one must look out for the wild life," Odets says, describing Bessie's vigilance. And, like any species that inhabits a hostile environment, Odets' characters develop a hard carapace, which serves both to protect and to attack. The wisecrack, as Odets reinvents it onstage, is the linguistic shell behind which his characters alternately hide and lash out. "Cut your throat, sweetheart. Save time," the gimpy small-time gangster Moe Axelrod, who boards with the Bergers, says to Hennie about her proposed marriage of convenience. Odets puts a fine spin on the sludge of street talk, and gives it a vibrant new currency and prominence. "I wouldn't trade you for two pitchers and an outfielder," Axelrod says to Ralph at the finale, in an exit line so strong that it lifts the bad odor of Axelrod and Hennie's running off together and abandoning her child. The act of speaking, as Odets dramatizes it, becomes a show of power in a powerless life. Laughter, according to Nietzsche, is an epitaph on an emotion; in Odets' hand, Jewish laughter is particularly ghostly, resounding with all the silent deaths of dreams deferred. His characters smile with cold teeth. Take this shrewd, oblique two-line exchange over dinner:

JACOB (*ironically*): If it rained pearls—who would work?
BESSIE: Another country heard from.

In the banter of these characters Odets shows language having a stage-managed revenge on life. Jacob's political bitterness momentarily vanishes when he lobs his sardonic grenade into the bourgeois patter of the dinner-table conversation, and Bessie's put-downs keep alive her illusion of potency in a life that is out of control. The terrific talk of Odets' characters mourns as it laughs.

Such is the power of Odets' dialogue that it works even in the Steppenwolf production, where the only poverty in evidence is a poverty of imagination. The mixed metaphor of Michael Merritt and Kurt Sharp's set, with expressionistic tenements looming above the naturalistic Berger house like anti-aircraft guns above a destroyer, announces the show's confusion of realms and its nervousness about creating a climate of claustrophobia on the stage. "I never in my life even had a birthday party," Ralph moans, but nothing on the

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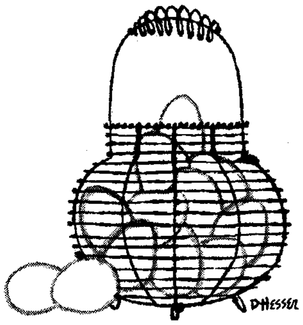
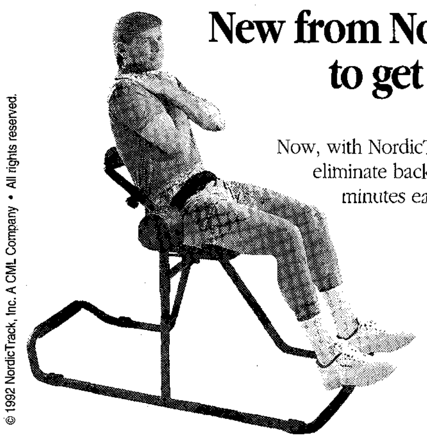
set conveys the threadbare or the pinched. In fact, the house looks like a nicely converted Northside Victorian floor-through: shiny hardwood floor, candles in the candelabras, cut glass on the table and in the kitchen door. This is poverty seen through a suburban lens. And the racial memory of unmanning fiscal panic seems as far from this cast as a sustained Jewish accent. Without the Jewish rhythms and the mordant whine of the Jewish humor, which echoes the gloom of centuries, the production can't find a core of belief. Only Nathan Davis, who plays Jacob, and on whose lined face life has left its mark, comes anywhere near the vicinity of the play. Otherwise, the cast is almost uniformly too callow and too young. Francis Guinan's Myron, lumbered with a ludicrous wig, speaks a language of entropy but crosses the stage with a spring in his step. Jeff Perry's genial, corn-fed Moe Axelrod gets none of the chip that the war-wounded gangster carries. And Sheldon Patinkin's unfocussed direction lets Barbara Robertson turn Bessie's flop sweat into frenzy, on the theory, I guess, that when one is skating on thin ice, safety is in speed.



Steppenwolf has been bold enough to program Odets but not shrewd enough to find a voice for a play that is all about sounding off. Odets wrote "Awake and Sing!" when he was twenty-eight, and it became a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, reversing a lifetime of botched missions. He had failed at school, failed as an actor, and failed even as a suicide. (He tried three times.) Song was Odets' metaphor of transformation. He built song not only into the title of his first major play but into the names of subsequent major characters, like Cleo Singer, in the 1938 play "Rocket to the Moon" ("Talent!—I'm talented. I don't know for what, but it makes me want to dance in my bones!"), and Leo Gordon, the philosophic voice in "Paradise Lost" (1935), who in early drafts of the play was called Kantor. Odets liked to compare himself to Walt Whitman (whose name Odets gave to his only son), and often invoked Emerson's dictum about the poet—"half song thrush, half alligator."

Odets had been one of life's bottom feeders, living off dimes and dreams as an actor with the Group Theatre. "I was sore at my whole life," he explained about the genesis of "Awake and Sing!" Before he discovered the insecurity of success, he'd lived the terror of poverty. The son of a first-generation Russian-Jewish émigré who had changed the family name from Gorodetsky, which means "urban man," Odets became the chronicler of the pathos of Jewish assimilation into American city life. In "Awake and Sing!" he pitted American optimism, which was grounded in the myth of abundance, against the demoralized resignation that came with the fact of scarcity. Odets' spokesman is the stymied twenty-two-year-old, Ralph, who broadcasts lack of opportunity in the play's first words: "Where's advancement down the place?" In his next breath he bleats, "All I want's a chance to get to first base!" At the finale, with a windfall left him by his beloved grandfather Jacob, whose suicide is just one of many mutations in the play brought on by the shaming pressures of poverty and powerlessness, Ralph faces down his frustrations: "My days won't be for nothing." Odets, too, held his face up to the world, and the world kissed it. Dubbed the new O'Neill, he became the spokesman of the thirties. He was on the cover of *Time.* Walter Winchell coined the word "Bravodets." Cole Porter dropped his name in the song "I'm Throwing a Ball Tonight," from "Panama Hattie." (With prescience, Porter rhymed "Odets" with "regrets," and "Awake and Sing!" made memorable that particularly punishing American sense of loss at the failure to become your best self—a failure that Odets' career came to exemplify.)

"Nobody knows how to act Odets anymore," the playwright William Gibson complained in 1988, in his introduction to Odets' forties diary, "The Time Is Ripe." He invoked the names of the heavyweight Group Theatre ensemble that originally made Odets' work sensational—Lee J. Cobb, Luther Adler, Morris Carnovsky, John Garfield, to



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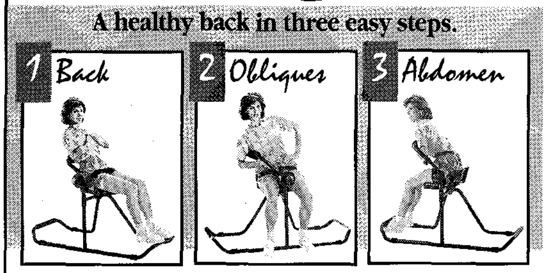

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mention a few. But the generalization is not true. As a series of excellent London revivals over the last two decades has shown, Odets can be done, and done well. His plays, despite what Clurman called his "lyric afflatus" and their ideological full dress, are a quirky blend of deep Jewish pessimism and a very American desire to shine. Their world is gray, not black and white, and they reflect the split in Odets' own personality. The peculiar paradox of "Awake and Sing!" (and of Odets' work in general) is that it celebrates both the dream and the sure knowledge that a dream is something you wake up from. His ironic music is apt for the post-imperial blues that America is starting to sing.

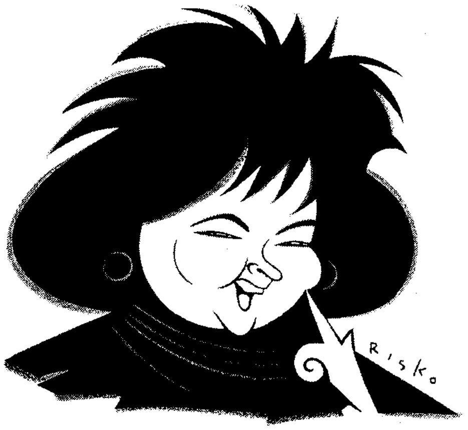
AT the Manhattan Theatre Club, the powerful revival of Caryl Churchill's "Mad Forest," a skillful mosaic of the Romanian people's response to the events in Timisoara and the collapse of the Ceausescu regime, is a wonderful display of all the theatrical skills absent from "Awake and Sing!" Here a superb cast of eleven actors manages to convey the flavor of Romanian speech without losing the rich detail of characterization. Mark Wing-Davey, who conceived the project in 1990, when he was the head of London's Central School of Speech and Drama, directs with exemplary restraint and resourcefulness, using the grays and ochres of Marina Draghici's excellent set to thrilling effect. "But America," gushes Lucia, who has gone to America, only to return after the Ceausescu government's collapse. "There are walls of fruit in America, five different kinds of apples, and oranges, grapes, pears, bananas, melons, different kinds of melon. . . . Everyone throws away great bags full of food and paper and tins, every day, huge bags . . . people live out of them." The speech, like so much of the play, is shocking in its worm's-eye view of life. "Mad Forest" asks us to consider a life without hope, where a fresh egg is an event, and where language itself is something that has to be hidden away. It makes so many of the West's deliriums look like cuticle despair. America, the nineteenth-century writer Harriet Martineau said, was meant to mean everything. Everything, that is, except resignation. ◆

ON TELEVISION

ROSEANNE HITS HOME

by James Wolcott

When Roseanne Barr (as she was then known) began as a standup comic, her voice was somewhere between a squawk and a quack—a squack. She sounded like a grievance committee doing a duck call. Standing on the stage of the "Tonight Show," she didn't have the fingertip polish of a Jerry Seinfeld or a Billy Crystal. She was stubby, squat. She giggled, averted her eyes from the camera, repeated herself. Even when she stood with her arms locked, like an Eskimo getting her picture taken, she seemed to shift around inside. In describing her glamorous life as an American housewife ("I prefer the title 'domestic goddess' "), Barr was cranky but cute, a butch Erma Bombeck. Her sheepish blush, her aw-shucks amateurism, softened the bite of her material. But there was will power to burn packed in that bucket of pudge. A Jew raised in Mormon country, Barr intended to move from the wrong side of the tracks and sit herself smack in the middle. Little did we know she intended to hold us hostage to her exhibitionism *forever.*



Roseanne Arnold: A darkened snapshot of suburbia, her show burrows from within.

ROBERT RISKO

Ever since Roseanne launched her own sitcom, her life has been one big unpopularity contest. Her outrages have been tried in the kangaroo court of the supermarket tabloids. The tattoos, the poundage, an ugly divorce, the marriage to the comedian Tom Arnold, their mud bath together for Annie Leibovitz's camera, the rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and crotch grab that earned her a stern "tsk" from President Bush, the charges and countercharges of child abuse within her family, the annual mowing down of producers, writers, and crew members on her show, the feud with Arsenio Hall (whom she called a triangle head), "mooning" incidents, more tattoos—it's been a regular barbecue. But some performers feed off flak. All that outside frenzy makes them focus close-range. Now in its fifth season, "Roseanne" (Tuesdays, ABC) has never been more centered, more apt. Even though it's the No. 1 show in the country, it has inspired few copycats. Like Ring Lardner's fiction, its offhand humor is harder than it looks. It seems like a simple recording of reality until you realize how much is surfacing.

A darkened snapshot of suburbia, "Roseanne" is set in the heartland—Illinois. The go-go giddiness of the parents' generation—hippies on Harleys, saddling the wind—has slowed into grubworm subsistence. Last season, Roseanne's younger daughter, Darlene (Sara Gilbert), went into such a protracted funk about her sucky life that she turned into mold. This season, gangrene has claimed the whole family. Roseanne's husband, Dan (John Goodman), had to cough up his bike shop to creditors. Cutbacks cost Roseanne her job at the mall. Her older daughter, Becky (Lecy Goranson), eloped with some loser and will probably be home leeching before long. What keeps them going is their gift for getting each other's goat. That's the American way. Where most sitcoms sound metallic, sarcasms springing like mousetraps in the characters' mouths, the scripts for "Roseanne" never stiffen into strips of type. They enjoy a loose, lazy fit, as if they'd been dug out of the

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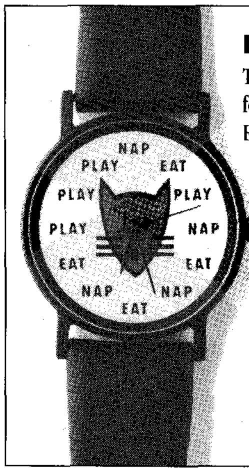

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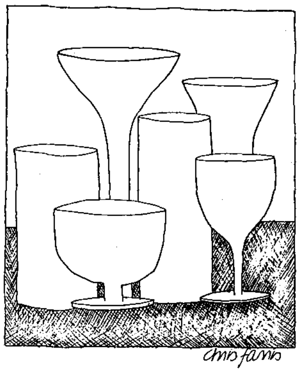
hamper. The wisecracks have the broken-in feel of family lore. The cast has developed such a sure delivery and shorthand rapport that they barely bother to move their lips. They think aloud to each other in a clear mumble.

It's an unbeatable cast. A generous force with sensitive feelers, John Goodman has gained so much weight this season he's in danger of becoming all gut. (It was bad enough when he rounded the bases in "The Babe.") But there's been no comparable sag in his performance. As Roseanne's sister Jackie, still searching for Mr. Right, Laurie Metcalf uses the feed-bag drop of her face to convey rising expectancy and dashed hopes meeting at different speeds. (Her eyes express hurt before the sag hits her cheeks.) Roseanne herself has shed the shell she had when the series started, no longer crouching behind the kitchen table as if wearing an umpire's chest protector. Her voice is lower now, dunked in coffee. Never a ray of sunshine, she has learned to satirize her own caustic vibe. One of the funniest episodes of the last couple of seasons featured the family quaking in fear as the calendar reached the red-letter date of her . . . P.M.S. It was shot like a horror spoof, her mood stalking the house like a monster—the hormone that ate its young. The show used P.M.S. as a metaphor to mimic and mock the power Roseanne Arnold has, as star and co-executive producer, to make everyone's life on the set miserable.



Yet it's more than a matter of her being the boss. There's an impacted anger in her, an ache with no off switch. At first guess, men seem to be the source of that anger. "Roseanne" has been called a feminist payback series, because of its belittling of Dan's beer-drinking buddies, whose idea of a good time is a burp contest. (One of the ape-men was played by an amusingly shifty Tom Arnold, who always acted as if he had something running down his leg.) But these stunted boys are nothing but noise, nuisances rather than nightmares.

The real rue on "Roseanne" is directed at the maternal line. "Roseanne" is a show about daughters warped and maligned by their mothers. Trying to squeeze through the door is Shelley Winters as Roseanne's grandmother, so punch-drunk she seems unsure of her own identity. She blinks fast, as if shuffling faces of former acquaintances in her mind, hoping to make a match. Her soul hides in a dense fog of flesh: every time she visits, it's the return of the Blob. At least, she's somewhat jolly. Far scarier is Roseanne's mother, played by Estelle Parsons, whose cracked voice creaks like a rocking chair as she sits in judgment. When *her* visits are announced, the whole family weaves like a gospel choir afflicted with woe. One of those control freaks with X-ray ability to find fault, Parsons' Mom masks her carping as constructive criticism, using that classic cop-out "I'm only trying to *help*, dear."

It's enough to make one snap. What with such a passive-aggressive pair of role models, it's a miracle Roseanne isn't eating with one hand and drinking with the other as her car hurls off a cliff. No one would begrudge her a primal scream. And the dysfunctional fallout doesn't stop with her. Roseanne's own sourness has seeped into the system, affecting her daughters. Darlene is chronically dour, Becky a runaway bride. But at least they engage in open hostilities instead of relying on inflections. What's refreshing about "Roseanne" is the honest sadistic chuckle Roseanne has as she finds new ways to embarrass her brats. (Like that sweet-sixteen party she threw for Darlene last week. "You really ought to do something special for her," said Jackie, to which Roseanne replied, "You mean passing her big head through my loins wasn't enough?" She bugs them. They bug her back. Humor is what keeps them from killing each other. But laughter is only a temporary release of tension. Given the pressures of the show's weekly grind, we probably shouldn't begrudge Roseanne Arnold her excesses. On camera, she's in control. Off camera, her exhibitionism may be what keeps her from imploding. ♦

MUSICAL EVENTS

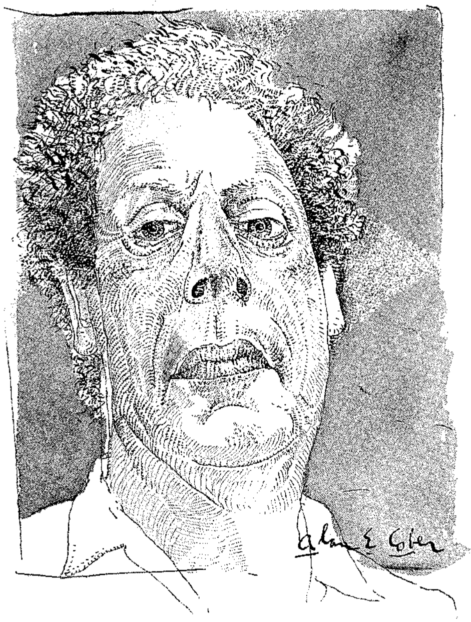
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS LATER

by Paul Griffiths

PHILIP GLASS is not the first opera composer to have some problems with Christopher Columbus as a hero. There were happier times—like the eighteen-twenties, when Felice Romani wrote a Columbus libretto, set by several composers—when it was possible to avoid any little awkwardness by means of opera's handiest escape route: a love story. However, already in Alberto Franchetti's "Cristoforo Colombo," written for the last centennial, there are dark clouds over the fifteenth-century Atlantic. The Mexicans (never mind that their chants and dances are surprisingly similar to those of the Egyptians of "Aida") have a princess who is prepared, as exotic princesses will tend to be prepared, to use seduction as an instrument of diplomacy, but the chief villains are the contending factions of Europeans, and Columbus becomes enfolded in another Romantic archetype, that of the misunderstood genius, as he dies with his dreams in shreds. Then, in Milhaud and Claudel's "Christophe Colomb," first staged in Berlin in 1930, the navigator is redeemed only at the cost of being translated into a religious metaphor: a new St. Christopher, bearing Christ to the benighted west.

This month's commemorations brought opportunities to encounter both these most celebrated Columbus operas of the past. The Franchetti arrived in a Koch Schwann recording, with Renato Bruson stoutly in command of the title role, and with the entire musical team, under Marcello Viotti, making impassioned grand claims for the piece—some of them justified. For all its debts to Verdi and to Meyerbeer, the work has a sure sense of purpose and magnificent choruses. As for the Milhaud-Claudel, that was given its American stage première by Brooklyn College—a brave effort, but a dim one, the fault lying less with the out-of-tune choral singing than with the Jewish composer's understandable reluctance to go all the way with his collaborator's Catholic imperialism. No doubt there will be another chance to see and hear the work in 2092, which will be soon enough.

How Mr. Glass's "The Voyage" will look then is a nice question. It could even have been made, with its last act opening precisely in that distant year, for the audience of a century hence—made to become a glum monument, recurring every hundred years, as so much inside it recurs, at rather shorter intervals. This is how we now respond to history: not as the convenient location for amorous intrigue it was for Romani, not as the source of moral instruction it was for Franchetti and his librettist, Luigi Illica, not as the model in dogmatic teaching it was for Claudel (if not for Milhaud), but blankly as the occasion of remembrance. "The Voyage" was created to fill the Met on October 12, 1992. It has no other function, no other purpose until the anniversary wheels round again.



ALAN E. COBER

Unfortunately, in order to qualify as the Met's quincentennial piece it had to make some reference to Columbus, but this was an obstacle briskly circumvented. Mr. Glass is reported to have said that he and David Henry Hwang, whom he engaged to flesh out his scenario, "had to find something about Co-

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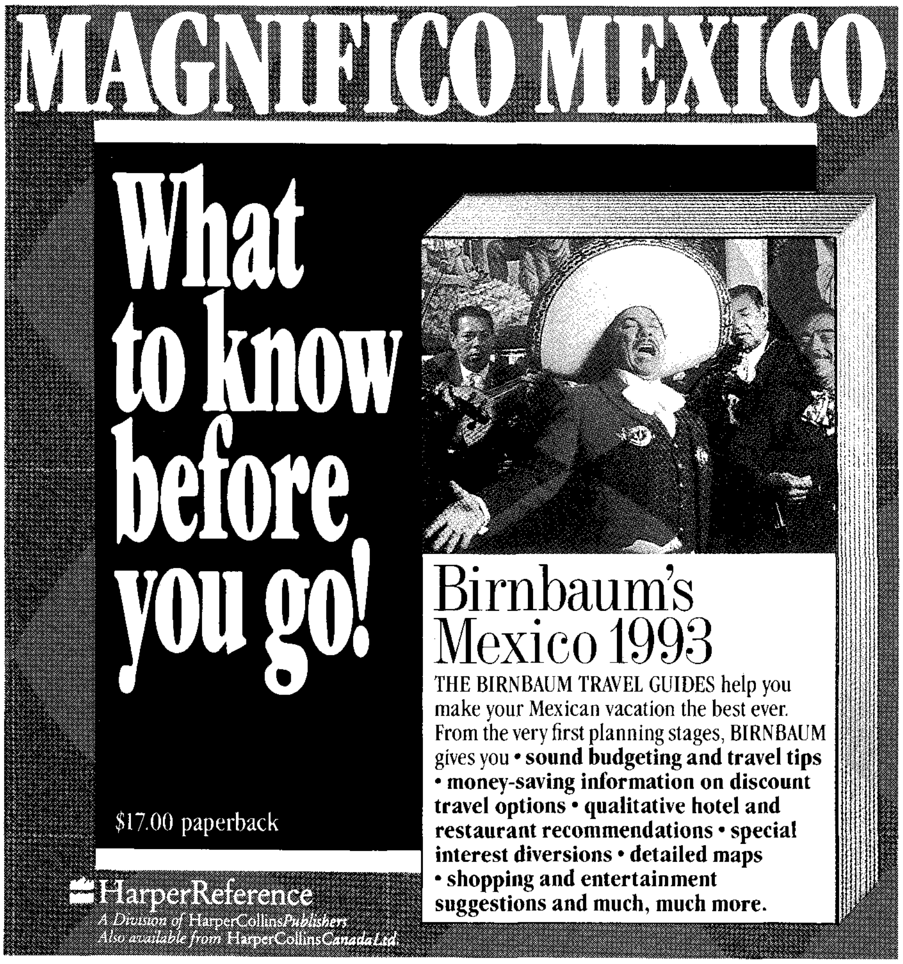
lumbus they liked." The candor is engaging, but their solution was a drastic one. They cut Columbus's contributions to just two scenes, in both of which he could be portrayed as abandoned to doubt: starting to discredit his vision after a month at sea, in the second act, and lying alone on his deathbed, though visited by the shade of Queen Isabella, in the epilogue. Otherwise, he is shoved aside to make way for heroes better suited to contemporary taste: a wheelchair-bound cosmologist (pasting Stephen Hawking into the picture simply as a quotation is an offensive piece of opportunism) and the female Commander of a spaceship. So all the problems of the Columbus story—and with them all the motivations for drama—are let slip as "The Voyage" goes off into the weightlessness of science fantasy.

Possibly, this wasn't what Mr. Glass and Mr. Hwang had in mind. If one were to listen to what they've said about the work, rather than to the work itself, one would have to conclude that they generalized the opera in order to show that it wasn't just about Columbus but about all who voyage, all who make that contact with the unknown. Hence the extrapolation from 1492 to the 1992 of the Hawking prologue, to the Ice Age of the first act, where extraterrestrials land on earth, and to the twenty-first century of the third act, in which a spacecraft, with the same Commander as the alien vessel of 13,000 B.C., goes off on a new journey of discovery. In none of the work's various situations, however, is there any engagement with the supposed subject matter. In the prologue, for example, big questions are blandly intoned by the chorus against racing orchestral ostinatos: "Is time a spherical object?" "Does God abhor a naked singularity?" They might as well be singing the Lord's Prayer or your shopping list for all the attention the music's paying—and it's this lack of attention that makes the hauling of somebody's life onto the stage so grotesque. Or again, at the end of the first act, when the Commander meets the earthlings, the opportunity for a meeting, a maneuvering, of two strange worlds is funked.

It may be that the failure here comes from the music's being swallowed into a literal depiction of ceremonial, into a kind of sacrificial dance. Ever since "Akhnaten," Mr. Glass has shown this tendency to give his repetitive music a direct embodiment in ritual stage action, rather than, more disconcertingly and interestingly, to create new rituals for it and with it, as he and his collaborators did in "Einstein on the Beach" and "The Photographer." Nor is the finale of Act I the only example of this in "The Voyage." The second act starts with an embarkation oratorio, as the chorus sings out Columbus's commission, interspersed with Biblical blessings in Latin from Queen Isabella. And the third act includes a parallel but comic ceremony, the chorus this time hailing the twenty-first-century world leaders—"President of North America, Chancellor of the United States of Africa, Chairman of I.T. & T."—gathered at the spacecraft launch site. One big tableau per opera—as Franchetti, to look no further, was aware—can be effective. Three might seem to enervate, if only, in "The Voyage," by their literalism, since everything around them is similarly statuesque.

And, of course, it's most obviously here, in its rigidity, that the piece lacks the means to cope with the issues it purports to be raising. Mr. Glass's music is now often faster, more mobile in metre, and more chromatic than it once was: the whirring at the start suddenly promises an adventurous escapade. But hope soon evaporates as the old emphatic patterns of beat and tonality assert themselves, and against those patterns the new wildness sounds merely out of order: the wandering lines casual, the harmony rank, as if the dissonant tones were a sort of infection. Add to all this the uniformly declamatory character of the vocal writing, the mechanical textures, the mechanical orchestration of those textures, and the lack of any formal device beyond alternation and repetition, and it must be clear that nothing essential has changed. Most devastatingly, given the title, the music has no equipment that might enable it to move to a different place from where it started, unless by the rudimentary expedient of getting louder or quieter. All homogeneous, it is not going anywhere. Turned in on simplicities, it has no vision for the stars.

The only help for it could come from the staging or—to a lesser extent, because the musical possibilities are so circumscribed—from the solo performances. From neither at the Met is the help altogether effectual. Robert Israel's



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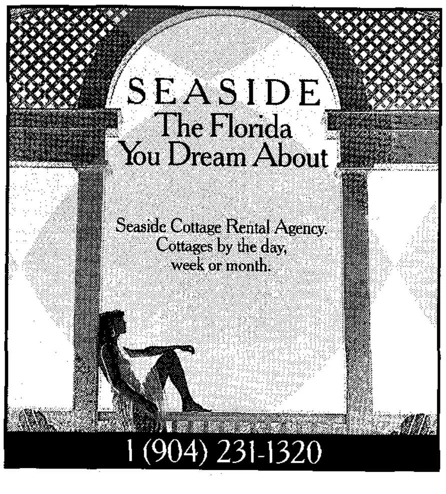

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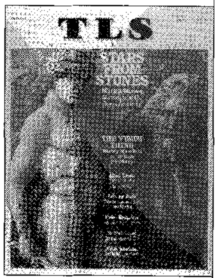

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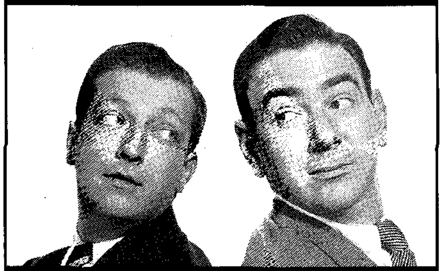

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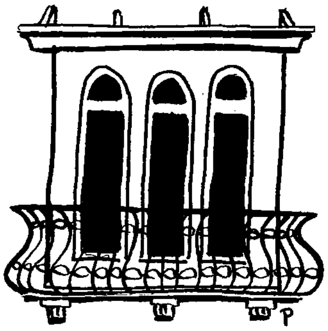
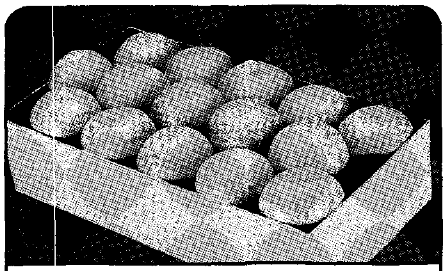
set begins by quickening anticipation for a spectacle that it doesn't quite deliver, then stops trying. The scientist and his room are seen suspended in midair, which becomes midspace as the components pull apart to reveal a vision of Saturn and its moons: we are keyed up to wonder, but the machinery gets in the way. And it's the same in the main body of the first act, which is played among white geometric shapes, flying and on the ground. The Commander and her three fellow crew members are discovered as if in free-fall, but again the wires are visible, and the scene is spoiled by the amplification of the singers (who are safely out of sight: those trembling, floating figures are doubles). Mr. Israel's most successful stage picture comes in the long marine nocturne of the next act, where Columbus is seen before the mast, with two mates singing from aloft. Otherwise, he's done much finer work elsewhere, as has the costume designer, Dunya Ramicova. There's an uncharacteristic tackiness to her creations here: the Ice Agers in ball gowns and bird masks in the first act, the hand-me-down Tintoretto robes, dresses, and vestments at Granada, the sea monsters getting into Columbus's lucubrations. It's possible they'd all look better if there were some flicker of life in the choreography, but I doubt it.



Because so much of the first two acts is achieved—or not achieved—through dance and design, the work of the director, David Pountney, is almost invisible until Act III. Then it's unmissable. For a few glorious minutes, we seem to be in the presence of a send-up, with two astronauts, the Space Twins, discoursing on astronomy while Mr. Pountney has them help themselves from a Coke machine in the sky. But after that it becomes apparent that the bathos is Mr. Glass's. The Space Twins are followed by Earth Twins, who bumble about to the accompaniment of a hunchbacked line in the lower strings that strongly suggests the Niebelung comedies of "Das Rheingold" and "Siegfried." From here we move to the absurd concourse of world leaders, appropriately given outsized false heads (with the chilling suggestion that this entire continent a century from now is going to be the dominion of Mrs. Thatcher's great-granddaughter) and entertained by cheerleaders. Mr. Pountney's talent for the nauseous and overblown is thoroughly in action, and seems all too right for a scene suggesting that its composer has given up the struggle.

From this point it might have been hard to pull back, except that Mr. Glass's music has got us used to shifting abruptly from one thing to another. So it doesn't much matter that the launch parody is followed by a quartet for the Commander and crew quietly nerving themselves. By this point, too, one has stopped worrying that scenes pass without anybody saying, doing, or feeling anything dramatic, or that the words are so often inaudible, partly because so many of them coincide with strong beats in the orchestra. The quartet has the air of a coda. And then comes another coda, the one that brings us back to Columbus as he lies dying. For anyone still interested in the piece as a drama, this would presumably serve as the moment of truth. Isabella, who presented herself to Columbus (and to the audience) throughout the second act as his scourge and protector, appearing to him in the boat scene as some manic amalgam of queen, lover, and Virgin Mary, now admits that the game is up: "Well, monarchs may change their minds." However, the music is no more perturbed by this display of fickleness than by the chorus's posing of the great questions of existence at the other end of the opera. And so the piece dribbles to its close.

One thing this final scene decides not to clinch is whether or not Columbus is the central character. He has more to sing as a soloist than anyone else, and much of the role lies in the challenging upper part of the bass's register, suggesting force of utterance. However, he passes his whole first scene, that of the embarkation at Granada, in silence, and much of what he does sing—the same problem again—is heedless of the temerity in the words. Vocally, dramatically, and expressively, the role is a thankless one, and it certainly can't all be



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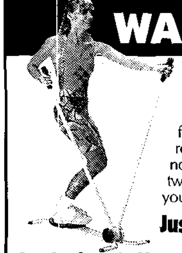

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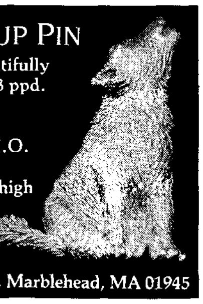

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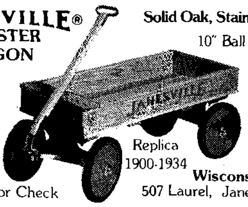

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Timothy Noble's fault that he made a gruff, thin impression.

It's perhaps just possible that the diminishing of Columbus was done by design, and partly so that the Commander would emerge as the most radiant presence. Patricia Schuman appeared a little under strain in the first act: this is, after all, some way from her usual territory, and Mr. Glass's vocal writing—as is true for all the parts—requires a constant flame. From her entry in the third act, she was at full strength, gloriously firm and confident, with a ringing thrill to the voice, and with the bearing of a Commander, assisted by one of Ms. Ramicova's better, if not exactly demure, costumes: a silver lamé cat suit. As Isabella, Tatiana Troyanos had that degree of authority, exerted by force of personality more than by vocal sophistication, right from the start. Douglas Perry sounded alarmed, as well he might, by one or two of his high entries as the Scientist; he then warmed through as First Mate, filling that place both on the prehistoric starship and on the Santa Maria. (It wasn't clear whether the identity of the three vocal personalities—indeed, the lack of much vocal characterization throughout the opera—was in the service of some conception of human beings as doomed vessels.) Kaaren Erickson and Julien Robbins were excellent as the other members of Ms. Schuman's crews; Jane Shaulis and Jan Opalach, dressed alike as caricature lady librarians, were the clownish Earth Twins.

Orchestral musicians, more than singers, must find it hard to stay involved in tasks that need virtuosity only in counting. Bruce Ferden, the conductor, seemed to be offering them enthused direction, and there was occasionally some responding skirl of excitement from high woodwinds, but much of the accompaniment sounded underfed and sleepy. The performers, though, are hardly the ones to be blamed for not caring. ♦

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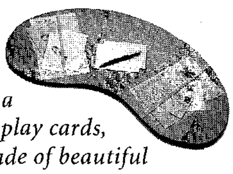

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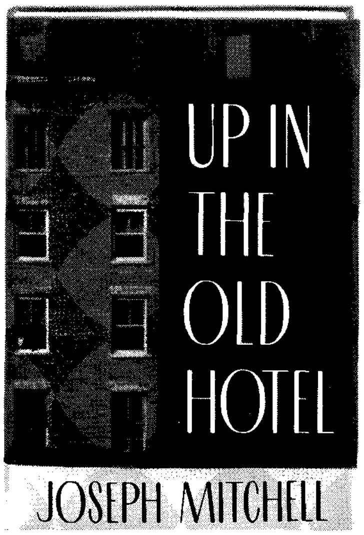

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BOOKS

GORE'S GOSPEL

by Wilfrid Sheed

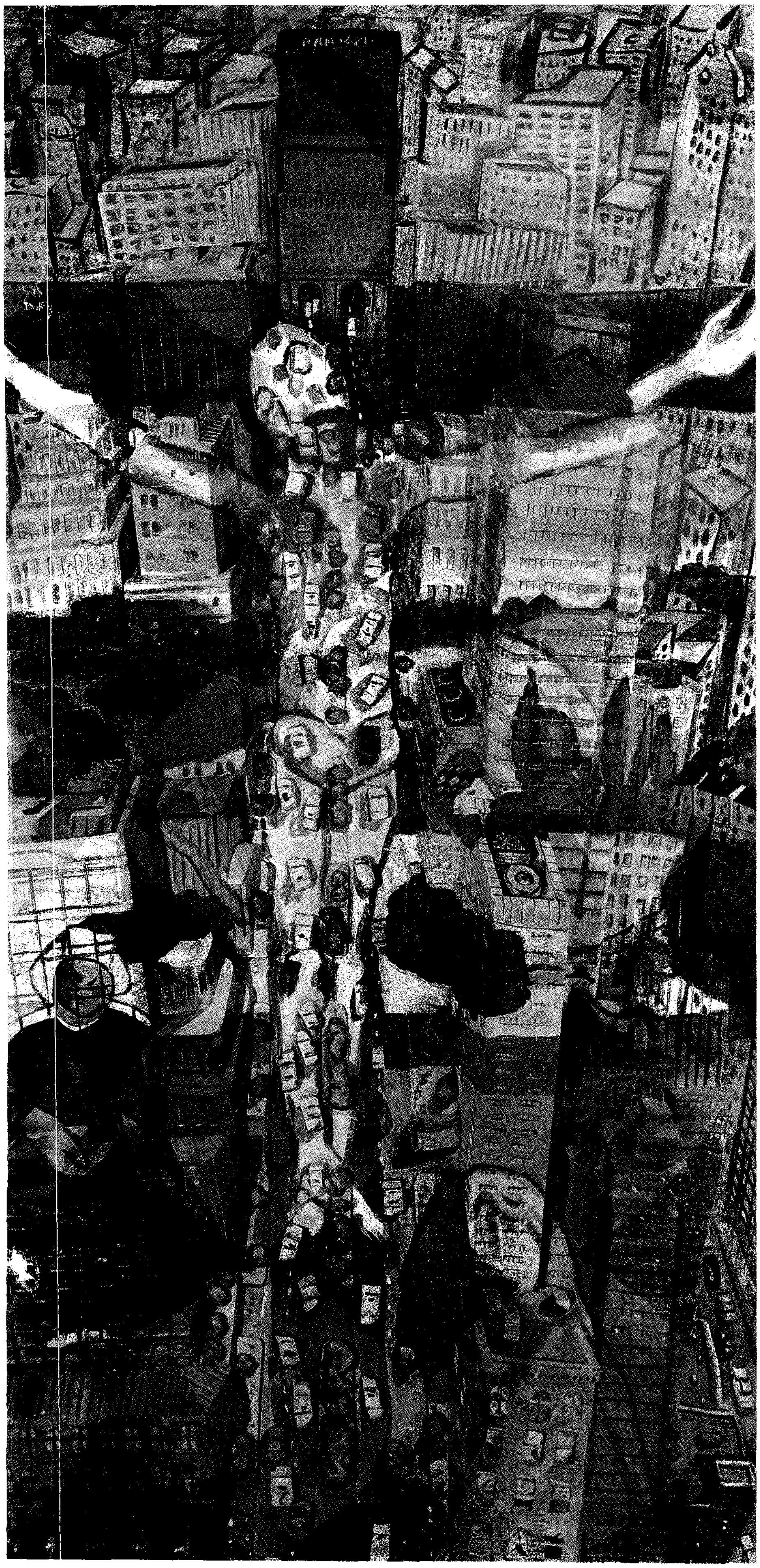
ANYONE who still harbors the slightest doubt that the novel is stone-cold dead need only pick up anything written by Gore Vidal in the last twenty years or so to have his hopes put to rest once and for all. Although Mr. Vidal is hardly the only writer to be bitched by the comparative eclipse of print in our times (in fact, he's survived better than most), nobody else carries on about it quite the way he does, or manages to drag it into so many discussions, leaving one to wonder, not for the first time, why such a bright fellow should repeat himself so often, or how a man of ideas could be content with so few of them: Plato's Symposium, the evils of monotheism, the national-security state—round and round we go on the same old hobbyhorses with the paint peeling off them. Boredom, plus maybe just a touch of lingering Charles Dickens envy (for which Henry James's sales figures remain the best antidote), seems like the most likely explanation for Vidal's fixation with the dying novel, since by his own estimate the old girl actually began to fade rapidly the day that talking pictures walked in the door, in 1927, when he was all of two years old. Surely he must be resigned to it by now.

Vidal has, in fact, just published a good book about sleeping with the enemy, called "Screening History" (Harvard; $14.95), which arrives, by good chance, just in time to chaperon his new novel, "Live from Golgotha" (Random House; $22), past brackish critics, who are bound to be charmed and distracted by the movie book. Sending out the books in convoy also serves the purpose of introducing and explicating the author better than a ton of jacket copy could. "The only thing I ever really liked to do," Vidal says in the very first sentence of "Screening History," "was go to the movies," which saves us a load of time right there.

A movie memoir may be the perfect form for the American expatriate—or semi-expatriate, as Vidal claims to be—since the two things you see most clearly when you leave home are your past and American movies, which, in the dim religious light of a movie house, can actually begin to run together. For instance, as we sit with young Gore listening to his blind grandfather, the imposing Senator Gore of Oklahoma, we can almost hear Walter Huston, or possibly Lionel Barrymore, thundering out the lines. And when the old man says, "If there was any race other than the human race, I'd go join it," it sticks. As his grandson sums it up, "he was a genuine populist; but he did not like people very much." Gore the younger has hewed to this most difficult mandate ever since.

"Screening History" could profitably be reread with each of Vidal's books, particularly his magnificent American-history novels "Burr," "1876," and "Lincoln" (the others are good but not magnificent), which seem all the more impressive in view of the bizarre Hollywood renderings of history that got him started on the subject. It's perhaps worth noting that this book consists of three lectures he gave at Harvard, where he was on his best behavior, and not just being clever enough to snow the witty bubbleheads of the talk-show business.

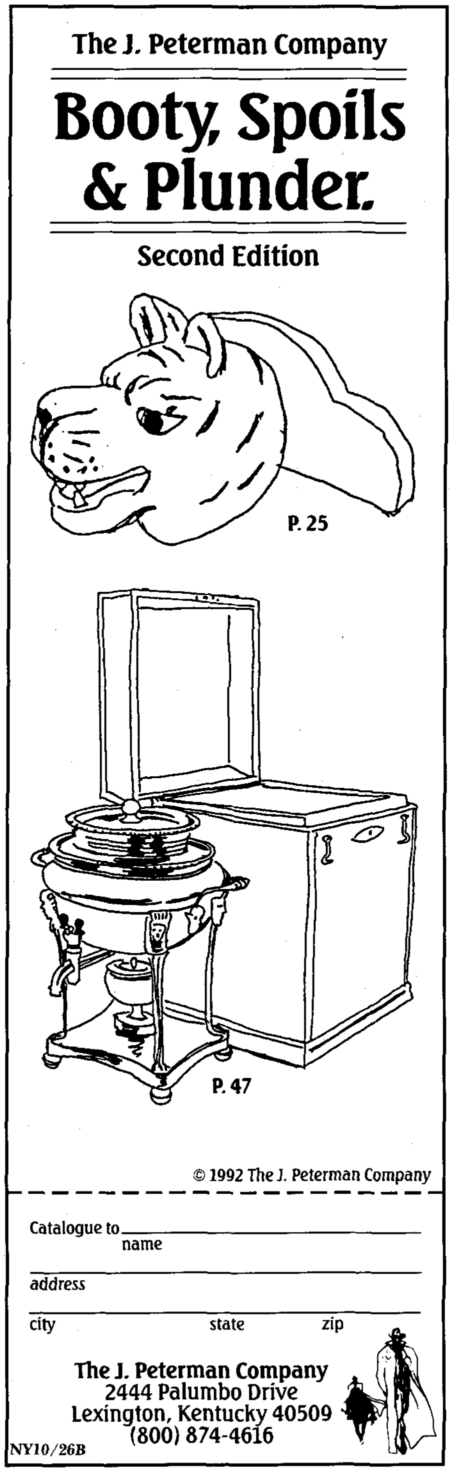
Interviews can do terrible things to the brain (witness Norman Mailer a few years ago), but there is barely a trace of damage in this book. "A current pejorative adjective is narcissistic," goes one of the few. "Lately the adjective is often applied to those 'liberals' "—those quotes are ominous—"who prefer to improve the lives of others rather than exploit them. Apparently, a concern for others is self-love at its least attractive, while greed is now a sign of the highest altruism." Now, who in the world thinks that, and does anyone really think it "often"? Charity can indeed be an ego trip, but the second part of the proposition is sheer flapdoodle, there only for aphoristic symmetry. "But then," the sequence galumphs remorselessly on, "to reverse, periodically, the meanings of words is a



very small price to pay for the freedom not only to conform but to consume"—and to contend contumaciously while we're at it. In "Screening History," this cumbersome passage (why not just stick out one's tongue and be done with it?) serves chiefly to remind us of how good the rest of the writing is. But, read as a program note to his new novel, it points up a problem that has dogged Vidal's polemical career all the way to Golgotha. To wit, how stupid can you take people to be and still call yourself a populist? Is it really possible to look up to the people and down on them at the same time?

UNFORTUNATELY, the medium Vidal has chosen to express his latest polemic in is, from where he sits, almost as dead as God Himself. Nothing could better illustrate the sickly state of the novel than the American reception of "Live from Golgotha." For a couple of dispiriting weeks, the author traipsed the talk shows, presumably looking for a fight and not getting a nibble. (A fight over a *novel*?) In a fit of laborious teasing worthy of the book at its heaviest, the publisher's ads did manage to dig up a quote from a Yogi Berra-like bishop who hadn't read the book because he was too disgusted by it, but there was no point asking what novel His Grace was reading instead. For the kind of response the author might have longed for, with angry mobs forming and a unique chance to play Sidney Carton (an early influence), he would have had to resign himself to making a movie. But for this, one needs help from the lordly technocrats who in his novel have the power to cancel the Christianity series overnight but in real life are so paralyzed by angry mobs, i.e., angry letters from three people, that they barely even know what to do about Andy Rooney.

Like them or not, the hotheads who gave Martin Scorsese's stupefyingly reverent, timidly unorthodox "Last Temptation of Christ" such a hard time are probably not that far removed from the hotheads who lined up for the latest installment of Dickens, and if Vidal weren't such a populist he might consider himself well rid of them. A utopia of enlightened atheists is probably as far away as ever, but a blessedly humane ideology keeps Vidal from just giving up on humanity and turning his guns on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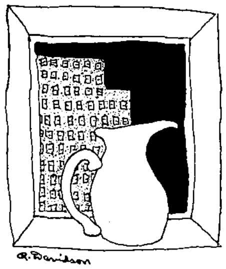
the rabble. Without the jokes, his account of Christianity boils down to the reign of the cynical over the simple-minded, so the jokes are necessary.

Meanwhile, such Christians as still have truck with novels are probably already as jaded as the next Bret Easton Ellis reader and may be mildly surprised, if not touched, to find their religion still being bashed by *someone*. And how does "Live from Golgotha" rank as blasphemy? Traditionally, the best work in this form has been done by believers who've gone sour, to annoy believers who haven't. Congenital atheists don't know the pressure points, and tend to swing wildly, while secular readers will laugh at everything at first but get bored quickly. (This, incidentally, applies to whatever is being blasphemed: baseball, motherhood, atonal music. Jokes are always more obvious than essences, which is why clowns dress in those subtle shades.)



In this strict sense, "Live from Golgotha" hardly qualifies as blasphemy at all. At its center is a funny treatment of St. Paul, but Vidal's Paul—or Solly, as he's called—has no connection with the original whatever: no effort has been made to capture the Pauline "sound" or intensity of affect, and, as for content, we're informed that his original epistles were so packed with recipes, grooming hints, and chitchat as to be quite unusable. The versions we have, Vidal explains, are actually rewrites dashed off by St. Timothy—who doesn't "sound" like the epistles here, either.

Vidal's St. Paul is a small, hairy chap with a big head, while his Jesus is a huge, fat one with a high, shrill voice that only dogs can hear with any satisfaction—an unusual quality in a popular preacher. But these attributes are quite arbitrary, and could easily be reversed; he could have made Jesus the small one, and have had St. Paul write his epistles to the Dalmatians, and so on. This is not satire but burlesque, or pin the tail on the saint, and anything goes.

Insofar as Vidal's characterizations have any point beyond getting a laugh, it doesn't seem a terribly telling one. Making Jesus fat, for instance, isn't much of an affront to the faithful, and if it isn't an affront what is it meant to be? The image of Jesus severed its ties with *la bella figura* some centuries ago; and if the original indeed had an eating disorder it would be one more human affliction for him to have borne for our sins.

But perhaps this is just a classic case of denial. No mention is made in the Good Book of St. Paul's juggling or tap dancing, either, although it might have made all the difference. (Scotland would be a whole different place if they'd known about it, and there mightn't even *be* a New England.) The usual knock on Paul is that he pretty much invented sexual repression, but that seems to be the last thing on the mind of Vidal's version. Solly—or Saint, as Timothy calls him—is much too busy trying to goose his disciple (St. Paul's famous "thorn in the flesh" blooms into a rosebush), and cutting a swath through the hot town of Ephesus, to go through the minimal motions of hypocrisy. And ghostwriter Timothy is tolerant almost to a fault, putting up with the non-stop pawings of Paul, and even submitting his heterosexual self to the Emperor Nero out of politeness.

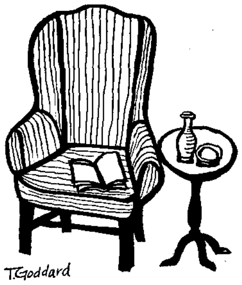
The story line along which these jokes and roguish impieties (blasphemy is too strong a word) are strung depends on the proposition that if some computer whiz could just remove the Gospels from the world's data bank they would vanish from human memory, since nothing that isn't in the data bank has really happened. (And, if you can believe that, you shouldn't have any trouble swallowing Christianity, or Zoroastrianism, either.) To make this story work, though, Vidal has to invest technology with a power beyond the wildest dreams of previous gods, including the power to wipe the whole screen clean—at first the public screen but later the private one of memory. Well, one must allow the author his donnée, as Henry James says, and Vidal's may simply be that one silly story deserves another. Since miracles are inherently unbelievable, his own credibility is not a serious problem, and we might as well at least have some entertaining, up-to-date wonder stories for a change, with some real celebrities in them.

But the new myths turn out to be even less charming than the old ones. In the course of the book, St. Timothy is subjected to increasingly jangling visitations from future TV programmers, computer experts, and kibitzers, who want him to write a new Gospel to replace the mysteriously disappearing originals, while they simultaneously play games with his head to make sure that the Gospel he writes suits them. "Every time one of them pays me a call," St. Timothy says, "I begin to write odd things that I am certain I do not remember or if I do remember would never have written down." Which means—I assume the author intended this—that we don't have to believe a single word in his book.

More subversively yet, the assorted holograms and reincarnations that haunt Timothy throughout manage to equip him with a television set, and he becomes well and truly scrambled. "Memory," explains an updated St. Paul who has slipped in among his visitors, "is easily tampered with not only by the Prince of this World and other demons but by a constant exposure to CNN on television. You are being subtly altered every moment, and as you change, so do I."

And with that we lose our only witness and our only source, and all bets are off. After the briefest of exposures to CNN, Timothy cannot remember for sure *anything* he's seen, and quite early on in his brainwashing he describes Jerusalem as having been "depressing" and "exciting" and "volatile" (amen to that, anyway) within a few pages.

By the time we get to Golgotha, anything goes. Jesus stops being fat and doesn't get crucified, but it could go either way, because the new prince is in full sway by now, and even St. Paul, the founder of the myth, has long since dissolved into two versions, a General Electric Paul and a Gulf + Eastern Paul, as distinct as the Jesuses of Mark and John; and Vidal's own Jesus, a hard-line Zionist, denounces at least one of them as "a self-hating Jew."



If this were a real novel, the dénouement would constitute at least one twist too many—the one that removes the head completely, and nullifies the rest of the book. Not only has everything we've read so far been rendered arbitrary but we don't even have to believe that it *has* been rendered arbitrary. "What is on a memory tape is eternal," says one of the computer experts (who is or is not to be trusted), "though a Hacker may find ways of temporarily disordering it." So are we in a state of temporary disorder, or what? My nonreading of this difficult passage pretty much accords with that of the prophet Ira when he says, "Let's call the calling off off."

With his novel *qua* novel gleefully sabotaged, we are left with the author's sheer performance, which has its moments. "She eats . . . nothing that has ever had a face except cauliflower" is a funny line in any century, and Vidal takes splendid advantage of his own comic conventions; e.g., "yentas, a Jewish word meaning ladies-in-waiting for the return of the messiah," or Nero sighing, "I suppose I shall have to prepare a blood bath. All that work! Those endless lists." The humor of anachronism is ideally the stuff of quick sketches and blackouts, and can wear thin over two hundred and twenty-five pages, but Vidal does some nice things with it right to the end, as when he has one TV functionary suggest to another that he "ask Mary Magdalene whether she thinks prostitution should be decriminalized."

One lowers the book (which isn't easy—it tends to fly around the room, cursing at religious objects) with suitably scrambled feelings, the most obvious being an uncomplicated pleasure in watching our most professional writer dance around and away from the dismal waves of facetiousness that keep threatening to engulf his book; at the last possible second, or not more than a fraction later, he changes the subject or the scene or the tone, or simply wisecracks his way to daylight. "James could not stop smirking even though smirking was strictly forbidden." Take that, Mrs. Rittenhouse.

In "Screening History" Vidal talks of moving "graciously, I hope, toward the door marked Exit." But, as Cyril Connolly insists, melancholy doesn't come naturally to Americans, and Vidal doesn't even try. His idea of how to move toward an exit is to thumb one's nose at the powers that claim to be as one's other hand rests on the doorknob, to make sure that one's defiance will be fresh in their memories.

Very funny, and heartening, too. But

When we wined and dined.

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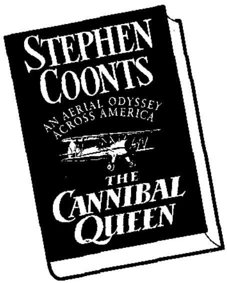

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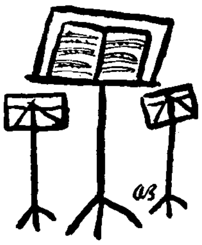
when you place the book next to the subject it mocks, it suddenly looks quite small. Giggling over epics is a treacherous literary form, and any reader who has ever felt even faintly the impact of the Gospels, for better or worse—or of any religious experience—is likely to feel as a Homer scholar might upon reading a parody of Achilles dragging Hector around the walls of Troy. One is only sorry that the writer got so little out of the original.

Vidal is not an urchin, of course, but a homosexual with a justified grievance. St. Paul grudgingly, in the manner of a cop reciting the Miranda rule, informs heterosexuals that "they do have a choice between marrying and burning," but homosexuals just have to burn. And burn Vidal does, long and slow, to the obstruction, at times, of his own view. In a piece he wrote recently in *The Nation*, since reprinted in a book called "The Decline and Fall of the American Empire" (Odonian; $5), he lashes out savagely at the Sky God, accusing Him of causing, like Al Capp's famous Shmoo in reverse, everything one doesn't like on earth and in Heaven, including racism and sexism.



But in his understandable eagerness to round up allies with these pitches, Vidal manages to reduce the whole rich stew of human history and behavior to a species of us against the Big Guy plot. Xenophobia is bred in the human bone, for the very good reason, as the sociobiologists tell us, that we presumably needed it once upon a time, and it's hard to believe that sexism needed monotheism to introduce it. The surprise, the anomaly that the sociobiologists can't explain, is altruism *outside* one's own gene pool, of the kind practiced by, among others, monotheists like Mother Teresa—whom Vidal refers to in "Golgotha" as "that tiresome woman in India." (He should be warned by her example: too much publicity can make anyone tiresome.)

With all this on the author's mind and liver, the wonder is that his novel about Christianity is as sunny as it is—a caper with only a few bilious moments, usually caused by the humorist's compulsion to let absolutely nothing pass unjoked about. (Incidentally, in a Christian bestiary Vidal is a familiar figure, too—the supercilious old Roman "who just doesn't get it," as they used to say in those times. So honors are even.)

Like Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, all of which turn out to be jokes about England, whatever the ostensible setting, "Live from Golgotha" is basically a satire on America—but a superficial America, of a kind one might imagine from headlines, CNN broadcasts, and occasional visits to TV studios. The religious insights owe a debt to Jimmy Swaggart and the fabulous Bakkers, who make it a lot easier to retell the Acts of the Apostles as an elaborate con game, based not on divine grace but on "the follow-up letter." Jollity is also to be had from the financial news: Jesus, it transpires, was actually crucified for lowering the prime rate, and Rome itself declined and fell not for any of the over two hundred reasons that have been suggested since Gibbon but "in a perfectly straightforward leveraged buy-out." There is nothing new under the sun, if this author has anything to say about it.

Nothing new in these jokes, anyway; they are simple transpositions from this age to that, and you laugh or you don't, and that's all. "If you go to Rome," Chesterton says, "you sacrifice a rich, suggestive life in Wimbledon," and it could be that by spending so much time in Ravello, Gore Vidal has placed himself just out of satirical range. But who wants to live in Wimbledon? What is interesting about "Live from Golgotha" is how instinctively the author's fiction-writing self steers away time and again from the quagmire of stale grievances that his essay-writing self keeps returning to. At this stage of his long and admirable career, Vidal is such an accomplished craftsman that he is almost immune to his own nagging, and whether or not an ingenious piece of fluff like "Golgotha" was worth doing at all, it's impossible to imagine its being done better.

Anyway, it's only a novel. And if the form is dead what does that make the reviewer of novels? Barely a palimpsest, or the shadow of a holograph on the all-conquering screen. So the author presumably neither knows nor cares what we say about him. And that's a comfort. ◆

BOOKS

WILSON'S VERSION

by Adam Gopnik

It is, as they say on "Hard Copy," the story that won't go away. A. N. Wilson's "Jesus" (Norton; $22.95) is no less than the third "adult trade book" to appear in America in the past six months that takes as its subject the "historical" Jesus—the man beneath the myth, or myths. Just this spring, Robin Lane Fox appeared with "The Unauthorized Version: Truth and Fiction in the Bible" (Knopf; $27.50), and in June Barbara Thiering's "Jesus and the Riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Unlocking the Secrets of His Life Story" came out (Harper San Francisco; $24). Of course, the first publishing craze for this subject produced *four* books, so maybe, after all this time, interest is actually slackening.

Wilson's book is the most readable of the year's batch. Lane Fox, who is a fellow of New College, Oxford, and the author of the superb "Pagans and Christians," an account of early Christianity and the conversion of Constantine, had bigger fish to fry: the whole of the Bible, from Genesis onward, was his subject, and he wanted to debunk it all. He did, but "The Unauthorized Version" became in the process an exhaustingly brilliant book, zipping back and forth between the two Testaments to poke holes in both, and proving in the end only that an Oxford don can condescend to anybody, even God. (Lane Fox thought it droll throughout to call Jehovah "Number One.") Barbara Thiering, for her part, takes the extreme academic line: find the right system and you'll have all the answers. After twenty years of single-mindedly studying the Dead Sea Scrolls, she has decided, not surprisingly, that the single-minded study of the Dead Sea Scrolls will provide the key to the Gospels. She believes that Jesus was a member of the community at Qumran which produced the scrolls, and that the New Testament is nothing but an elaborately disguised allegory of parochial feuds in that community; the "Egypt" that the holy family flees to in Matthew, for instance, is a reference to a period when the Qumran community was under the control of Egyptian ascetics.

Wilson, on the other hand, is writing not a book with a thesis but something more agreeable: a celebrity bio—a Life. Although Wilson is almost unknown in this country, he is far from unknown in England, and the English reviews of his book have divided their time about equally between considering what A. N. Wilson has to say about Jesus' life and speculating on what Jesus would have had to say about A. N. Wilson's. (The *Sunday Times* reviewer of Wilson's book actually wrote, loftily, that "it is notable that Wilson has not mentioned the fairly recent break-up of his own first marriage.") Disliking A. N. Wilson, in fact, seems to be a minor, after-hours sport over there, like pub darts. Wilson became well known in London in the nineteen-eighties as the original "young fogey"—the least apologetic of the generation of young Thatcherite intellectuals. He earned a reputation, as tiresome to read about as it must have been to experience, for a kind of theatricalized stuffiness—the John Betjeman bit without any of Betjeman's originality. Worse, he made a simultaneous reputation for the only thing in the world more tiresome than British stuffiness, which is British naughtiness. He performed a series of wearying little "pranks," among them publishing a conversation he had during a private dinner with the Queen Mother.

"Jesus" is mercifully less antic and much more "sincere." Only once, in a long section explaining why seemingly allegorical names in the New Testament, such as the Beloved Disciple, might have been widely understood to refer to real people, does Wilson show his old colors. He writes, nostalgically, "In the 1980s in Britain, the Prime Minister was so famous that she could be alluded to by kennings or phrases—'the Iron Lady' or simply 'the Lady' or 'the Right Honourable Member for Finchley.' . . . Later historians could be puzzled by these references to the Iron Lady. Some would claim that she had

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obviously been a mythological being, while others would suggest that some such person might conceivably have existed though they did not know her name. Then, one day, perhaps, archaeologists might unearth a railway-station sign-board emblazoned with the word FINCHLEY, and one part of the puzzle would be solved."

Given that Wilson is still capable of that kind of stuff, the reader might expect his book to be a slightly smug attempt to retell the Jesus story in modern terms. But Wilson is much more earnest and unorthodox. Far from the moderately reverent, politely skeptical C. of E. account one might imagine, his is an almost defiantly agnostic book. He believes that although Jesus actually existed, the divine Jesus is entirely a late invention. He not only questions the Resurrection (though he does have a weak spot for the Transfiguration) but flatly denies that the historical Jesus could ever have taken part in the creation of the Eucharist or have claimed to be the second figure in the Trinity. He concludes that Jesus' real ideas were entirely Jewish and local, and played no role in the development of the Christian Church, and that therefore "in so far as they are discernible in the Gospels, we can see that they have been almost the least influential ideas which were ever propounded."

Wilson's first three chapters are a long and readable introduction to modern Gospel methodology. They make the necessary point that the Gospels are not essentially historical accounts to which religious interpolations have been added but theological narratives controlled by an ideological vision. The modern idea that you are supposed to distinguish prophecies and miracles from real events ran directly counter to the Evangelists' theatrical, spectacular imaginations. Making those distinctions was not part of their job.

But Wilson also has the courage to insist on the legitimacy of a "naïve" reading of the Gospels. For all their ideological imperatives, he argues, the Gospels still somehow manage to read much more compellingly as biography than as theology—as a portrait of an original, particular man: ironic, intelligent, short-tempered, overeducated, possessed by a sublime ethic but also exasperatingly cold and conceited. There is what Wilson calls a "mercilessness and directness" to most of Jesus' remarks in the Gospels which don't sound like anyone else in ancient literature. And the Gospels, he points out, are filled with "little novelistic details," and "often, as when he is quarrelling with his family or insulting them behind their backs, or making cleverly cruel debating points, these details seem to clash with the 'sinless' Jesus of theology." There is a distinct human being in there somewhere, and Wilson is determined to fish him out.

Picking his way through the chronicles, Wilson ends up with a picture that seems, at the very least, internally coherent and psychologically plausible. (Even the lay reader can catch him out on a couple of errors, though; for example, he uses a famous archeological study of the exhumed body of a crucified man as confirmation of the essential accuracy of the Gospel account of Jesus' Crucifixion, without seeming to know that more recent studies of that same skeleton suggest that the execution was, in fact, completely unlike the Gospel story.) Wilson's Jesus is a wide-ranging Jewish intellectual and wit who also happened to be a reluctant, charismatic national leader—sort of a combination of Jonathan Miller and Gandhi. Jesus, in Wilson's view, was the scion of an important rabbinical family in Galilee. (The Greek word *tekton*, mistranslated as "carpenter" in the King James Version, actually means "scholar"; as Wilson points out, the surviving parables, for all their folkish charm, don't show much acquaintance with fishing or carpentry, and are filled with botanical misinformation that comes right out of the Talmud.) This Jesus began as a follower of John the Baptist, who may have been taken to be the Messiah—meaning, in this case, the national deliverer. Trailing in the Baptist's wake, Jesus assembled to his support a coalition of all the local Galilean factions opposed to the Roman occupation, from the more respectable to the most extreme. (Wilson points out that the word "zealot," used to describe Jesus' disciple Simon, refers not to a personal trait but to membership in a group of extreme nationalists, while "Iscariot" derives from *sicarii*, the name of a group of knife wielders, and means that Judas

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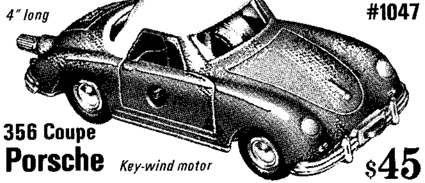

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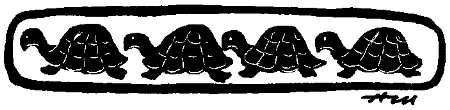
belonged to a group of nihilists who stabbed Romans more or less at random.)

It is only after John the Baptist's death that Wilson's Jesus becomes original. Far from leading his little group of cutthroats forward, he refused the kind of national Messianic role that everybody expected him to take up. "If they did not actually believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the family of Jesus believed that he had a unique role to play in the spiritual destiny of his nation, and the evidence rather suggests that Jesus was not willing to play the role which they had set up for him," Wilson writes. "It is not the story of a simple carpenter getting ideas above his station. . . . It is rather, a divinely chosen being stepping anarchically out of line." But—and this was Jesus' real tragedy, as Wilson sees it—Jesus, finding himself with an increasingly devoted following, somehow talked himself into the notion that he could do it all: get rid of the Romans without a fight, and bring the violent Jewish factions together with the more conventional ones. He got involved in a plot to overthrow the Roman occupier—that, Wilson thinks, is why there is so much in the last three days that the Evangelists themselves confess to find baffling—while at the same time trying to maintain his pacifist principles. The Romans, who had no patience with making fine distinctions among groups of insurrection-minded Jews, executed him—not at the Jews' request, as a blasphemer, but of their own necessity, as a terrorist.

All this seems believable, and corresponds to the sense of improvisation that the Gospels still convey—the sense that Jesus was making up his mission as he went along. It is also, in its general shape, instantly recognizable as a typical story of oppressed and oppressors: the shrewdness, the need to hold together a political coalition of fanatics that might break apart at any moment, even the funny mixture of charismatic leadership and slightly otherworldly lack of realism. Replace Jesus with Gandhi—or, for that matter, with Martin Luther King—and the whole thing hangs together as a human event.

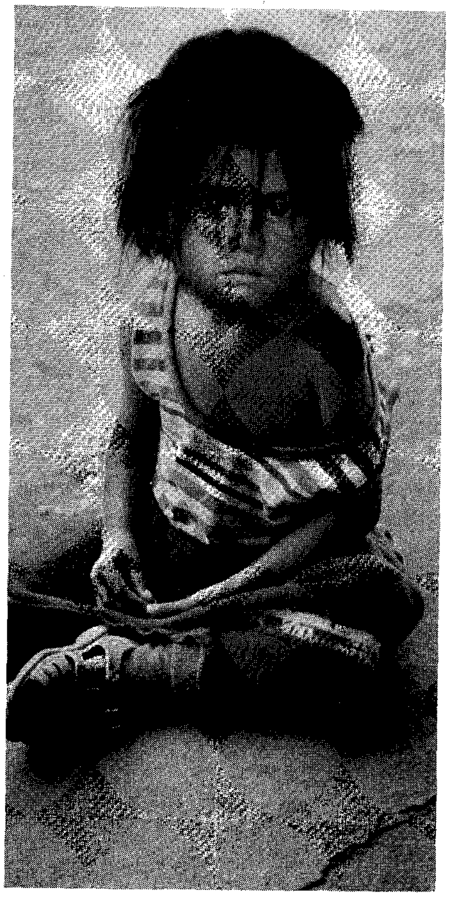
Wilson also has a thesis to prove, which might be called the Bobby Kennedy theory of the Resurrection. He believes that after the Crucifixion Jesus' body was taken from the tomb by his family, and that the "Resurrection" involved the identification of Jesus' brother James as his successor. This happened, according to Wilson, partly through a genuine case of mistaken identity (James is the mysterious young man in the garden who, seen at a distance, might be Jesus) and partly through a metaphor. James and the rest of Jesus' family, we know, ran the earliest church in Jerusalem, and James' followers saw his taking up his brother's mission as a form of rebirth. But if James is Bobby, then St. Paul is Oliver Stone—someone who was hanging around the fringes, became obsessed with the stories of Jesus' death (rather than the example of his life), and then imposed on the story of the killing his own eccentric and melodramatic vision, eventually turning a simple story of an executed nationalist Hasid into a grand, world-enveloping tale of a martyred and resurrected king.

All books about Jesus, no matter how rigorous their historical method (and Wilson's is not particularly rigorous), end up as sermons. A certain number of Jesus' sayings get isolated and defined as authentic, usually on more subjective grounds than most scholars are willing to admit; what you choose to single out is, in the end, what you think matters most. For Wilson, there are two such passages. The first is Jesus' easily overlooked remark, during the event of the loaves (as Wilson notes, Mark pointedly does not call it a miracle), "Make the men sit down." Wilson emphasizes that by "men" Jesus really meant *men*, and that the remark was not only an attempt to rally together the warring guerrilla bands but also an insistence that they put down their weapons. The other passage Wilson points to is the parable of the Publican—the tax collector and collaborator, whom God preferred to the Pharisee praying beside him in the Temple. Wilson rightly emphasizes that Jesus, against the rabbinical grain, was not saying that the Publican was favored because he was good. On the contrary, he was saying, to paraphrase Mae West, that goodness had nothing to do with it. From God's point of view, behaving badly looks about the same, and is about as useful, as behaving well; anyone who imagines that working hard or doing good or behaving properly pays off is missing the point. Wilson says, "It is not so much that [Jesus] overthrew morality as that he asked how far it got you. His answer would seem to have been: not very far."



All this gives us a completely plausible Jesus. The problem is that what humanity wants is an implausible one. *Credo quia absurdum*—I believe because it is absurd—or, at least, I am interested because it seems a bigger deal than *that*. Wilson makes Christianity into a cosmic joke: a mixed-up egomaniac leads a botched rebellion on the fringes of the Empire, and the rest is hysteria and misunderstanding. But, although he is hostile to conventional, Protestant "liberal" readings of the Gospels, which emphasize the ethical code abstracted from its historical context, he nevertheless ends up with a purely "ethical" or "rabbinical" Jesus—more Hasid than Anglican rector, maybe, but still a figure whose teaching was essentially moralizing rather than magical. It is just as possible, though, to offer the directly opposed view, as Hyam Maccoby did recently in his "Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil" (Free Press; $22.95), or as, closer to Wilson's own home, William Empson did for so many years. In this view, Christianity, far from being an ethical advance hijacked by superstition, represented from its beginning a reversion to a primitive cult magic. Jesus was a wonder-worker, whose reputation rested on his miracles (the accounts of exorcisms, of raising the dead, etc., do take up far more space in the Gospels than his ethical parables), and when Paul and his followers turned the teaching into the most primitive kind of nature religion—a straight-out human-sacrifice-to-appease-the-gods cult—they were just taking up where Jesus left off.

Of course, one needn't be either a believer or a cynic to see that what makes Christianity such a selling article is that it inextricably combines both elements: a powerful ethical core and personal example, and a sacrificial cult of death and rejuvenation (with an Earth Mother thrown in). No other religion combines occult ritual and high-mindedness so effectively. There is Jesus the moralist and Jesus the primitive magician—we have them both. This fact shapes what



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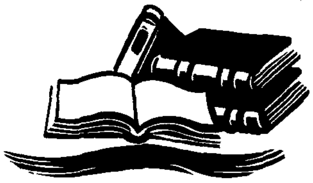
are now two distinct, self-sustaining strains of popular literature. On the one hand, we have books like Wilson's and Lane Fox's, which try to wrest the "historical core" from the legendary base. On the other, there are books like Thiering's or—even further out on the fringe of scholarly respectability, but commanding an enormous audience—the works of writers like Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln, whose "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" has sold more than half a million copies. (That book argues that Jesus survived the Crucifixion and went to live in France—Barbara Thiering also believes this is possible—where he founded a secret cult that lasts to this day.) The magical Jesus won't go away. The attempts, serious or lurid, to bring Jesus into history merely end up reaffirming the essentially double nature of the religion, only now with the ethical core in trade hardcover and the magic on the airport paperback racks.

d. ehrenberg

If all books about the historical Jesus are partly sermons, they are also—since they all end up with the same ambiguous figure—at least partly allegories about something else. We wouldn't read them if they weren't. One way to read "Jesus" is as a parable of the disenchantment of the Conservative intellectuals. For one brief, shining moment in Wilson's youth, it seemed as if the old, secure, make-believe England could be summoned up out of the past; a belief in *some* form of Christianity was essential to completing that picture—that imaginary Victorian/Edwardian order had to have a benevolent, C. of E. Jesus presiding in the background. In Wilson's early writing, the sense that Christianity and the Conservative Party go hand in hand is so deeply felt as to be an almost unconscious controlling belief. Only in England is there a national church in which the figure of Jesus and the ideal of a nation have been asked to fit cozily together. But that dream is over, and Wilson sees now that it can't be recovered. Nobody in America has much feeling for Conservative millenarianism, as opposed to left-wing utopianism, but there is a genuine pathos in the extent to which Wilson is now ready to give up what once seemed essential. It is also to his credit that he had the honesty to see that all that the Gospels would give you was half a Jesus, and the wrong half—the ethical, Jewish half, not the benevolent, presiding Anglican half. (Even the magical Jesus practiced the wrong kind of magic—subversive and occult rather than conserving and generous.) One more God that failed.

Maybe if you were willing to settle for another kind of English Jesus though, you wouldn't have to give him up. Wilson ends with a peroration on the Holocaust and on what Christianity has done for two thousand years to the Jewish nation, whose destiny was Jesus' overriding concern. He concludes that Jesus would have been horrified by what has been done in his name. This is a nice reading, but it seems to me sentimental—or, at least, purposefully ignorant of the more unappealing Jesus. In Wilson's book there is one astonishing omission; nowhere is there a single mention of the word "Hell." The plain and horrible truth is that Jesus, in texts that we have every reason to believe are as authentic as the parables, grimly promised not just most Jews but almost half of humanity a punishment of which Auschwitz was the human version Stevie Smith—who, for all her self-conscious eccentricity, remains the sanest and most deeply moving of all modern English commentators on the Christian story—saw that even this fact didn't necessarily mean giving up on Jesus. She wrote once about Jesus' fiercer sayings "These words must have meant something else? I dare say, I dare say. If Christ was 'good,' they must certainly have meant something else. Again you see the ranks close and I expect a good many non-Christians and atheists will be found in these ranks, they close to defend Christ and the belief that Christ is good. . . . Need we love him less? I do not think so, but rather perhaps more. His teaching about the Kingdom, his strange parables, the curious love he had for our not very lovable race, his quick discernment of hypocrisy, his contempt for material values, for these things one must love him. . . . In the late Roman world of his day, in the seedy cynicism of the Empire's religious up-holstery, how this teaching runs and flashes." ♦



BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Where Do You Stop?
by Eric Kraft (Crown; $15)

WHEN black students show up in Peter Leroy's junior-high class, he perceives them not as "other" but as an extension of a spectrum that includes him and lighter-skinned people he knows. He makes friends with one of these new classmates while they are collaborating on a science project. He loses the classmate, however, when de-facto segregation is instituted; his gorgeous and cerebral science teacher quits in protest, and the project is left hanging. This novel, the tenth installment in the highly engaging series collected under the title "Little Follies," is the fulfillment of that science assignment, handed in thirty-five years late. Its subject, as the title suggests, is the nature of boundaries, or, rather, the impossibility of definitively establishing them. In dealing with a subject both explosive and cosmic, Mr. Kraft exercises his customary light touch—perhaps at its peak in pseudoscientific diagrams that appear throughout the book and make you laugh out loud.

O Caledonia
by Elspeth Barker (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $18.95)

TRAGEDY and comedy are elbow to elbow in this fine first novel. Set in the north of Scotland after the Second World War, it begins with the death of its subject: sixteen-year-old Janet is found mysteriously murdered, wearing her mother's evening dress. Only then are we told her story. After an adorable infancy, Janet sees her popularity wane. Bright, passionate, extravagantly awkward, she is considered a misfit even within her own eccentric family: she bursts into tears at the sight of a wounded pigeon, uses Latin at inopportune moments, always throws up in the car. Janet is happiest when she is alone—tramping about in the terrible Scottish weather, fortified by remembered lines from Tennyson, or attempting to teach her beloved jackdaw to say "Never more" (her heartless brother teaches it to say "Never mind" instead). Despite our heroine's impending death, we remain entranced by the author's lustrous narrative; it grants Janet's stunted life an improbable, operatic grandeur.

Sylvia
by Leonard Michaels (Mercury House; $10)

THE unnamed narrator of this quasi-memoir beds the subject, Sylvia, the afternoon they meet and moves in immediately afterward. She seems to take this for a declaration of absolute devotion, and regards his friendships and, especially, his time at the typewriter, where he is pounding out and tearing up his first stories, as diminishing this love. They fight passionately, cap the fights with fierce, unsatisfying sex, and marry. If you were in New York in the sixties, it is impossible to read about their Greenwich Village of the Fat Black Pussy Cat coffeehouse and forty-dollar walkups without affectionate recognition, and if you were also artistic and insecure and living with a lover it may be impossible not to feel recognition with a component of horror. But for any reader this compact, stylish book may be hard to put down.

GENERAL

Matters of Principle: An Insider's Account of America's Rejection of Robert Bork's Nomination to the Supreme Court
by Mark Gitenstein (Simon & Schuster; $23)

IN 1987, Mr. Gitenstein was chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee. (He's now a lawyer in private practice.) His narrative explains exactly how the Bork nomination was defeated in the Senate, and why. His exposition of legal theory is exceptionally lucid, possibly because, he tells us, he and the chairman of the committee, Senator Joseph Biden, of Delaware, worked at refining their own understanding of Bork's ideas and American constitutional law in order to make them clear to the senators and the public. Above all, Biden wanted (and Mr. Gitenstein wants) everyone to grasp the point that opposition to the Bork nomination wasn't merely Democrats versus Republicans but was based on the belief that Bork's legal philosophy was at odds with American legal tradition and with the norms and expectations of ordinary Americans. This book isn't all abstractions; it's also a lively, absorbing story about the modern art of politics, clean and dirty.

Yves Montand: You See, I Haven't Forgotten
by Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, translated from the French by Jeremy Leggatt (Knopf; $25)

THIS is a successful example of a difficult literary genre, and part of the reason for its excellence is that Montand—a stickler for candor and unadorned truth—worked with the authors. With Montand occasionally taking over the narrative, the three tell the compelling story of Ivo Livi, the son of an Italian Communist in exile in Marseilles, who ascends from hairdresser's assistant and shipyard worker to international fame as Yves Montand—singer, dancer, and star of stage and screen. In the course of this tale, which really begins in the streets of Marseilles during the Second World War, with young Montand trying his luck in neighborhood vaudeville houses, we learn of the glories and miseries of a great performer's life, including his often clamorous sexual career: with his first love and mentor, Edith Piaf; with his actress wife of over thirty years, Simone Signoret; and with dazzling casuals, like Marilyn Monroe. Montand, who died last year at the age of seventy, had a rich, dramatic life, and it's pretty much all here. Many photographs. ♦

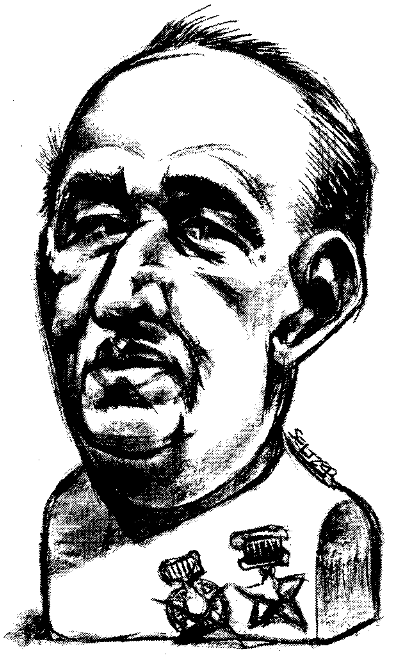
SHOUTS AND MURMURS

STRANGER THAN FICTION

by Julian Barnes

On Friday, September 4th, Todor Zhivkov became the first former Communist head of state to hit the slammer. Bulgarian TV news that evening detailed his seven-year sentence and discussed its implications; then, by way of a signoff, the newscaster held up the cover of a forthcoming book called "Bodlivo Svinche"—"The Porcupine." "Soon," he announced, "you will be able to read what an English novelist has to say about the trial of Zhivkov."

Three weeks later, I flew to Sofia with more than the usual prepublication anxiety. My Bulgarian editor had a world première of impeccable timeliness; I had a knapsack of literary fears. I'd used the outline of the Zhivkov trial (plus various specifics), borrowed the country's topography, and then gone off on my own. But would they see it like this? Would they think I had imaginatively transformed their recent history or pillaged and perverted it? Would they even view the book as a novel, rather than just history à clef? I confess to the occasional grim fantasy about my arrival at the Sofia airport. "Ah, Mr. Barnes, just in time for the monthly reunion of Todor Zhivkov's former bodyguards. They're waiting to greet you personally in the V.I.P. suite."



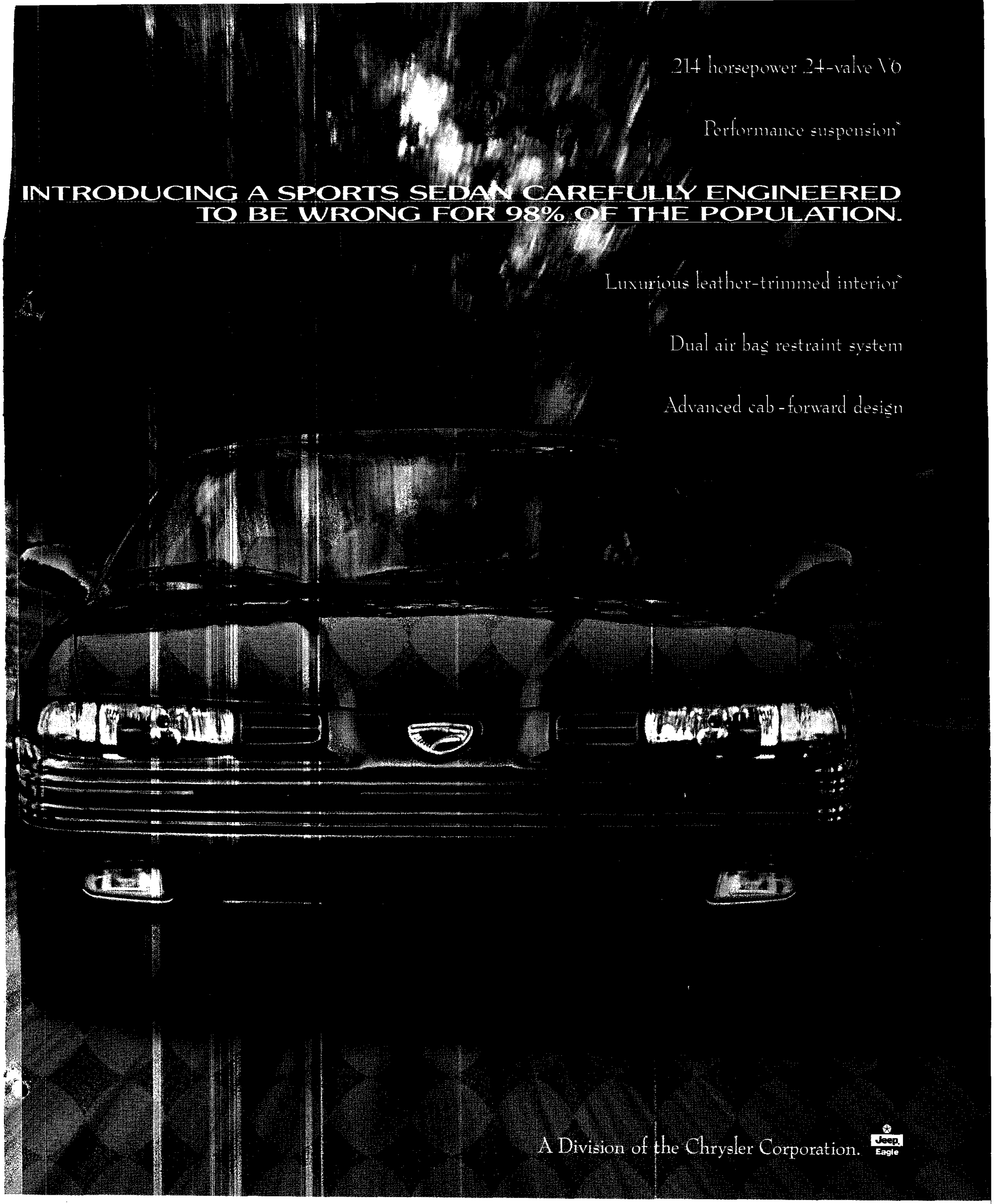
Todor Zhivkov

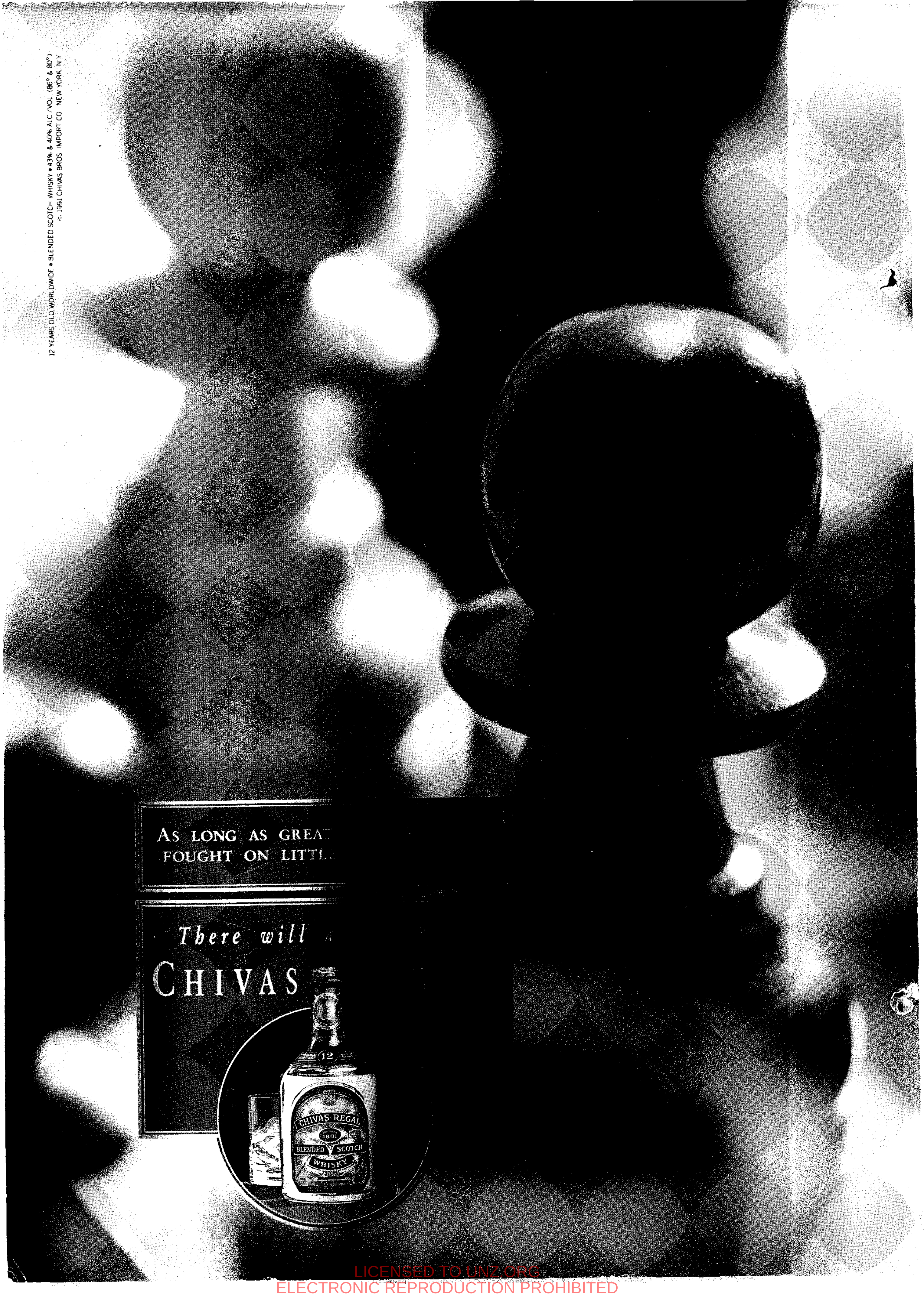
Bulgarians, in any case, are justly suspicious of Westerners writing about their country. Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man" did them no favors; Malcolm Bradbury's novel "Rates of Exchange" is not remembered kindly; and then there is the small matter of John Updike's story "The Bulgarian Poetess," from "Bech: A Book." The poetess in question is supposedly Blaga Dimitrova, who just now happens to be Vice-President of the country. A recent Bulgarian collection of Updike stories pointedly omitted this one—on the ground, I was told, that it oozed scorn. Would I escape the biblio-demonology? Already I saw a thesis being sharpened: "Methodologies of Contempt in Post-Colonial Western Fiction."

There were certainly problems over the demarcation line between fiction and reality. Some complained that my dictator was more intelligent than theirs had been; others wanted to correct what they saw as factual errors. The phrase "No Bulgarian could have written this book" was pronounced several times, with various emphases, while Blaga Dimitrova herself, with an ironic smile, told me, "We have become accustomed to foreigners explaining our country to us." And then came the sort of encounter a novelist half hopes for and half dreads.

In "The Porcupine" I set the closed certainties of a Communist ideologue against the frailties and open certainties of his prosecutor, Peter Solinsky, a fretful, unheroic man tempted to secure a conviction by legal rule-bending. The former leader derides him as "an imbecile boy" and "a pitiful cabbage-brained lawyer," mocks his "shiny Italian suit," and undermines him in court by exposing an affair the prosecutor once had in Italy. Solinsky was, of course, a character of my pure invention, but I shivered when, just before the official presentation of my book, I was introduced to Prosecutor Krasimir Zhekov, the recent conqueror of his near-homonym. He said, "I am Peter Solinsky," shook my hand, and, to my relief, gave me a broad smile. I was comforted that he was physically quite different from *my* prosecutor, but couldn't help noticing his beautiful blue silk suit, which, yes, shone. Later, we strolled the dusty autumnal boulevards of Sofia for an hour, comparing fiction and reality. He asked how I'd known various details of Zhivkov's behind-the-scenes behavior; I answered (using the novelist's technical term), "I guessed." He told me that Zhivkov, a lifelong nonsmoker, had taken to nicotine during the trial and now, in his early eighties, chain-smoked the finest brands. I wished I'd known that. After we parted, a friend asked him if he'd been offended by anything in the book. "No," he replied. "In fact, I envied that prosecutor his affair with the Italian woman."

Todor Zhivkov is currently appealing the verdict; Prosecutor Zhekov is currently appealing the sentence, wanting it upped to ten years. On the way to the airport, I learned that "The Porcupine" was No. 3 on the Bulgarian best-seller lists. I also learned that Todor Zhivkov had just sent for a copy to read in his prison cell. ♦

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